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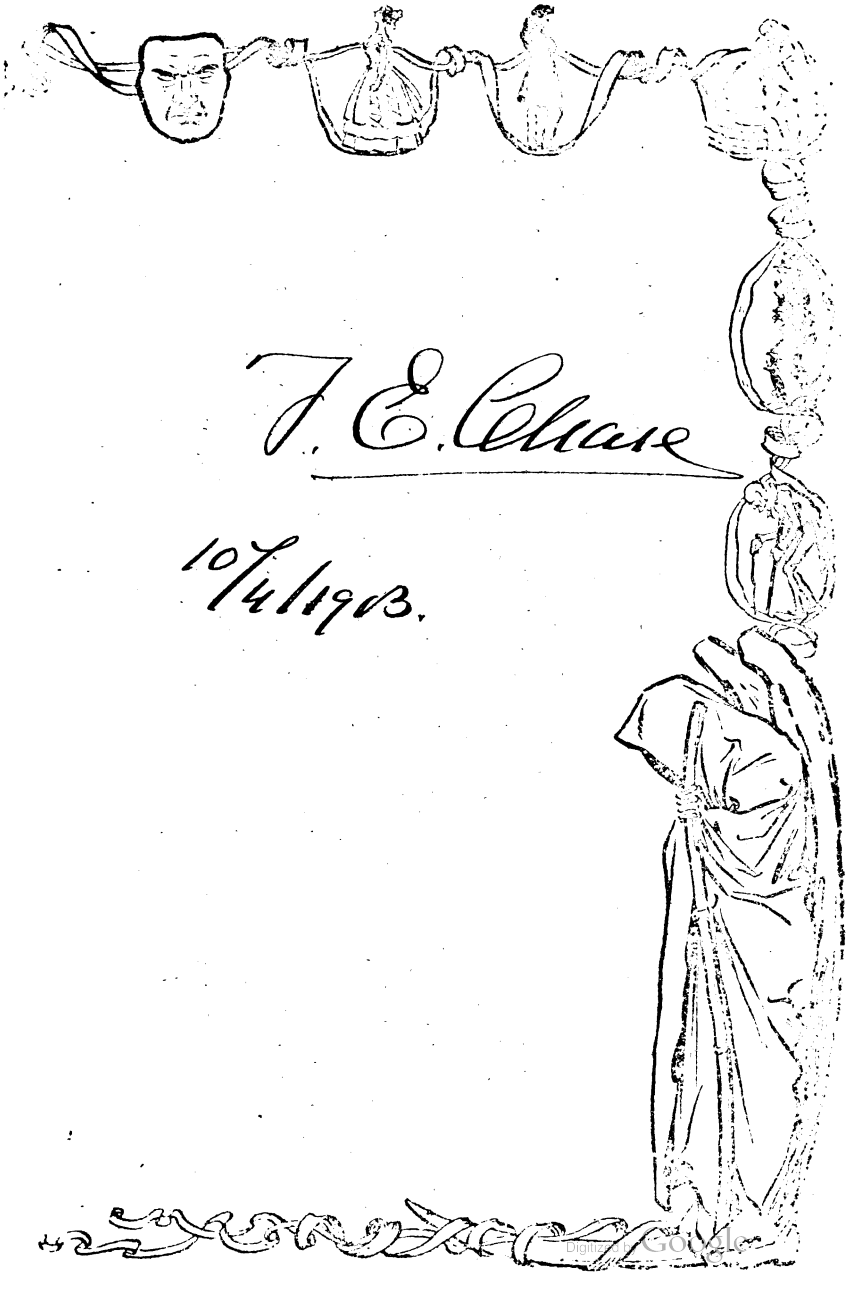


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THE HISTORY OF SAMUEL TITMARSH

AND THE

GREAT HOGGARTY DIAMOND

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Crayon Sketch by Samuel Laurence.
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THE PROSE WORKS OF WILLIAM MAKEPEACE THACKERAY

THE GREAT HOGGARTY DIAMOND ETC.

Edited by
WALTER JERROLD
with Illustrations by
CHARLES E BROCK

LONDON
J M DENT & Co
1903

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BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTES

THE GREAT HOGGARTY DIAMOND

THIS was one of the earliest of Thackeray's longer short stories, written at a time of great anxiety and received in the most discouraging fashion. It was in 1840 that the cloud first fell over his briefly happy married life, and he had recently suffered the loss of the second of his three young children—actual experience alone could have inspired the restrained poignancy of Chapter XII. When the story was written it is said to have been offered to, and declined by, *Blackwood's Magazine*. It appeared in *Fraser's* during the last four months of 1841, the full title running '*The History of Samuel Titmarsh and the Great Hoggarty Diamond*. Edited and illustrated by Sam's cousin, Michael Angelo.' The reception of the tale was not encouraging and the author received a hint to cut it short. Writing in 1851 he said, 'I was a boy ten years ago bleating out my simple cries in the *Great Hoggarty Diamond*.'

If the general readers, or the Editor, of the magazine failed to appreciate the story there were some who were more discriminating, for in Carlyle's *Life of John Sterling* there is an interesting extract from a letter which Sterling wrote to his mother on December 11, 1841 :—

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'I have seen no new books; but am reading your last. I got hold of the two first numbers of the *Hoggarty Diamond*; and read them with extreme delight. What is there better in Fielding or Goldsmith? The man is a true genius; and, with quiet and comfort, might produce masterpieces that would last as long as any we have, and delight millions of unborn readers. There is more truth and nature in one of these papers than in all ——'s novels together.' To this Carlyle, unaware that Sterling had also written directly to the author, adds: 'Thackeray, always a close friend of the Sterling house, will observe that this is dated 1841, not 1851, and have his own reflections on the matter.'

A few years later the success of the *Snobs*, of *Mrs. Perkins's Ball*, and of *Vanity Fair* suggested the reissue of the *Hoggarty Diamond* as a book. In October 1848 Thackeray wrote to his friend, Mrs. Brookfield:—'I have been re-reading the *Hoggarty Diamond* this morning: upon my word and honour, if it doesn't make you cry, I shall have a mean opinion of you. It was written at a time of great affliction, when my heart was very soft and humble. Amen. *Ich habe auch viel geliebt.*' Early in the following year the small volume was published with the following preface, dated Kensington, January 25, 1849:—

'My kind friends, the publishers of this little book appear to have a very high opinion of prefaces, and demand one for the present occasion, in terms so urgent that it is impossible to refuse a compliance with their petition.

'The story appeared originally in *Fraser's Magazine* in the year 1841, and was written at a time when the writer himself was suffering under the severest personal grief and calamity.

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Those who are curious in such points of literary biography may thus account for a certain sobriety and melancholy which pervades this little tale. As I read it myself, after a seven years' lapse, I can recall the circumstances under which it was written, and the thoughts, other than those on the paper, which accompanied the author through his work.

'The tale, which was always a favourite with its writer, was not particularly well received at the time of its first appearance; or noticed, except by one or two persons, one of them the late John Sterling, who wrote me a letter concerning it, which gave me at that time a great comfort and pleasure. Other literary aspirants may be consoled for their own failures by hearing that this story was refused by one magazine before it found a place in *Fraser's*, nor was it until the success of *Vanity Fair* (which work was refused by a magazine too) that I found, or perhaps sought, publishers bold enough to venture upon producing the *Hoggarty Diamond* in its present connected shape.

'Those enterprising men are anxious that the moral of the tale, viz., that speculations are hazardous, and that honesty is the best policy, should be specially pointed out to the British public. But that moral is spoken a thousand times every year. Are not the newspapers full of advertisements about California? Have we not the Railway Share List as a constant monitor? It was after paying a call, with a very bad grace, that I thought to myself ruefully,—why did I not remember the last page of *The Great Hoggarty Diamond*.

'Because prudence sometimes comes in a little too late, and parsons do not practise what they preach, shall there be no more advice, and no more sermons? Profit by it or not: at least the present discourse is not very long.'

In 1857 *The Great Hoggarty Diamond* formed part of the fourth volume of Thackeray's collected *Miscellanies*.

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Anthony Trollope, in his volume on Thackeray in the *English Men of Letters* series, says that in writing this story the novelist 'first invented the name of Michael Angelo Titmarsh,' which is by no means true; but then he also dates the appearance of the story in *Fraser* four years too early.

MEN'S WIVES

Appeared originally, as part of the *Confessions of George Fitz-Boodle*, in *Fraser's Magazine* during 1843; but after the appearance of the first story and the first part of the second the 'Confessions' title was dropped. The order of their serial appearance was *Mr. and Mrs. Frank Berry* (March), *The Ravenswing* (April, May, June, August and September), *Dennis Haggarty's Wife* (October), and *The ——'s Wife* (November). The first three were reprinted in the fourth volume of *Miscellanies* (1857). The fourth has not been reprinted, except in a volume of Thackeray's stray papers; it is, fully, *The Executioner's Wife*, a romantic story of mediæval days quite out of keeping with the other sketches.

THE BEDFORD ROW CONSPIRACY

"A story of Charles de Bernard," declares the author at the outset, furnished the plot of the *Bedford Row Conspiracy*. The tale appeared originally in the *New Monthly Magazine* from January to April 1840, and was included in the second of the two volumes of *Comic Tales and Sketches* published in 1841. It also formed part of the third volume of *Miscellanies* (1856).

W. J.

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THE HISTORY

OF

SAMUEL TITMARSH

AND THE

GREAT HOGGARTY DIAMOND

A

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CHAPTER I

GIVES AN ACCOUNT OF OUR VILLAGE, AND THE FIRST GLIMPSE OF THE DIAMOND

When I came up to town for my second year, my aunt Hoggarty made me a present of a diamond-pin; that is to say, it was not a diamond-pin then, but a large old-fashioned locket, of Dublin manufacture in the year 1795, which the late Mr. Hoggarty used to sport at the

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Lord Lieutenant's balls and elsewhere. He wore it, he said, at the battle of Vinegar Hill, when his club pigtail saved his head from being taken off,—but that is neither here nor there.

In the middle of the brooch was Hoggarty in the scarlet uniform of the corps of Fencibles to which he belonged; around it were thirteen locks of hair, belonging to a baker's dozen of sisters that the old gentleman had; and, as all these little ringlets partook of the family hue of brilliant auburn, Hoggarty's portrait seemed to the fanciful view like a great fat red round of beef surrounded by thirteen carrots. These were dished up on a plate of blue enamel, and it was from the GREAT HOGGARTY DIAMOND (as we called it in the family) that the collection of hairs in question seemed as it were to spring.

My aunt, I need not say, is rich; and I thought I might be her heir as well as another. During my month's holiday, she was particularly pleased with me; made me drink tea with her often (though there was a certain person in the village with whom on those golden summer evenings I should have liked to have taken a stroll in the hayfields); promised every time I drank her bohea to do something handsome for me when I went back to town,—nay, three or four times had me to dinner at three, and to whist or cribbage afterwards. I did not care for the cards; for though we always played seven hours on a stretch, and I always lost, my losings were never more than nineteenpence a night: but there was some infernal sour black-currant wine, that the old lady always produced at dinner, and with the tray at ten o'clock, and which I dared not refuse; though upon my word and honour it made me very unwell.

Well, I thought after all this obsequiousness on my part, and my aunt's repeated promises, that the old lady would at least make me a present of a score of guineas (of which she had a power in the drawer); and so convinced was I that some such present was intended for me,

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that a young lady by the name of Miss Mary Smith, with whom I had conversed on the subject, actually netted me a little green silk purse, which she gave me (behind Hicks's hayrick, as you turn to the right up Churchyard Lane)—which she gave me, I say, wrapped up in a bit of silver paper. There was something in the purse, too, if the truth must be known. First there was a thick curl of the glossiest, blackest hair you ever saw in your life, and next there was threepence: that is to say, the half of a silver sixpence hanging by a little necklace of blue riband. Ah, but I knew where the other half of the sixpence was, and envied that happy bit of silver!

The last day of my holiday I was obliged, of course, to devote to Mrs. Hoggarty. My aunt was excessively gracious; and by way of a treat brought out a couple of bottles of the black currant, of which she made me drink the greater part. At night, when all the ladies assembled at her party had gone off with their pattens and their maids, Mrs. Hoggarty, who had made a signal to me to stay, first blew out three of the wax-candles in the drawing-room, and taking the fourth in her hand, went and unlocked her escritoire.

I can tell you my heart beat, though I pretended to look quite unconcerned.

'Sam, my dear,' said she, as she was fumbling with her keys, 'take another glass of Rosolio' (that was the name by which she baptized the cursed beverage): 'it will do you good.' I took it, and you might have seen my hand tremble as the bottle went click—click against the glass. By the time I had swallowed it, the old lady had finished her operations at the bureau, and was coming towards me, the wax-candle bobbing in one hand and a large parcel in the other.

'Now's the time,' thought I.

'Samuel, my dear nephew,' said she, 'your first name you received from your sainted uncle, my blessed husband; and of all my nephews and nieces

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you are the one whose conduct in life has most pleased me.'

When you consider that my aunt herself was one of seven married sisters, that all the Hoggarties were married in Ireland and mothers of numerous children, I must say that the compliment my aunt paid me was a very handsome one.

'Dear aunt,' says I, in a slow agitated voice, 'I have often heard you say there were seventy-three of us in all, and believe me I do think your high opinion of me very complimentary indeed: I'm unworthy of it—indeed I am.'

'As for those odious Irish people,' says my aunt, rather sharply, 'don't speak of them, I hate them, and every one of their mothers' (the fact is, there had been a lawsuit about Hoggarty's property); 'but of all my other kindred, you, Samuel, have been the most dutiful and affectionate to me. Your employers in London give the best accounts of your regularity and good conduct. Though you have had eighty pounds a year (a liberal salary), you have not spent a shilling more than your income, as other young men would; and you have devoted your month's holidays to your old aunt, who, I assure you, is grateful.'

'Oh, ma'am!' said I. It was all that I could utter.

'Samuel,' continued she, 'I promised you a present, and here it is. I first thought of giving you money; but you are a regular lad; and don't want it. You are above money, dear Samuel. I give you what I value most in life—the p,—the po, the po-ortrait of my sainted Hoggarty' (*tears*), 'set in the locket which contains the valuable diamond that you have often heard me speak of. Wear it, dear Sam, for my sake; and think of that angel in heaven, and of your dear Aunt Susy.'

She put the machine into my hands: it was about the size of the lid of a shaving-box: and I should as soon

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have thought of wearing it as of wearing a cocked-hat and pigtail. I was so disgusted and disappointed that I really could not get out a single word.

When I recovered my presence of mind a little, I took the locket out of the bit of paper (the locket indeed! it was as big as a barndoor padlock), and slowly put it into my shirt. 'Thank you, aunt,' said I, with admirable raillery. 'I shall always value this present for the sake of you, who gave it me; and it will recall to me my uncle, and my thirteen aunts in Ireland.'

'I don't want you to wear it in *that* way!' shrieked Mrs. Hoggarty, 'with the hair of those odious carroty women. You must have their hair removed.'

'Then the locket will be spoiled, aunt.'

'Well, sir, never mind the locket; have it set afresh.'

'Or suppose,' said I, 'I put aside the setting altogether: it is a little too large for the present fashion; and have the portrait of my uncle framed and placed over my chimney-piece, next to yours. It's a sweet miniature.'

'That miniature,' said Mrs. Hoggarty solemnly, 'was the great Mulcahy's *chef-d'œuvre*' (pronounced *shy dewveer*, a favourite word of my aunt's; being, with the words *bongtong* and *ally mode de Parry*, the extent of her French vocabulary). 'You know the dreadful story of that poor, poor artist. When he had finished that wonderful likeness for the late Mrs. Hoggarty of Castle Hoggarty, county Mayo, she wore it in her bosom at the Lord Lieutenant's ball, where she played a game of piquet with the Commander-in-Chief. What could have made her put the hair of her vulgar daughters round Mick's portrait, I can't think; but so it was, as you see it this day. "Madam," says the Commander-in-Chief, if that is not my friend Mick Hoggarty, I'm a Dutchman!" Those were his Lordship's very words. Mrs. Hoggarty of Castle Hoggarty took off the brooch and showed it to him,

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'"Who is the artist?" says my Lord. "It's the most wonderful likeness I ever saw in my life!"

'"Mulcahy," says she, "of Ormond's Quay."

'"Begad, I patronise him!" says my Lord; but presently his face darkened, and he gave back the picture with a dissatisfied air. "There is one fault in that portrait," said his Lordship, who was a rigid disciplinarian; "and I wonder that my friend Mick, as a military man, should have overlooked it."

'"What's that?" says Mrs. Hoggarty of Castle Hoggarty.

'"Madam, he has been painted WITHOUT HIS SWORD-BELT!" And he took up the cards again in a passion, and finished the game without saying a single word.

'The news was carried to Mr. Mulcahy the next day, and that unfortunate artist *went mad immediately!* He had set his whole reputation upon this miniature, and declared that it should be faultless. Such was the effect of the announcement upon his susceptible heart! When Mrs. Hoggarty died, your uncle took the portrait and always wore it himself. His sisters said it was for the sake of the diamond; whereas, ungrateful things! it was merely on account of their hair, and his love for the fine arts. As for the poor artist, my dear, some people said it was the profuse use of spirit that brought on delirium tremens; but I don't believe it. Take another glass of Rosolio.'

The telling of this story always put my aunt into great good-humour, and she promised at the end of it to pay for the new setting of the diamond; desiring me to take it on my arrival in London to the great jeweller, Mr. Polonius, and send her the bill. 'The fact is,' said she, 'that the goold in which the thing is set is worth five guineas at the very least, and you can have the diamond reset for two. However, keep the remainder, dear Sam, and buy yourself what you please with it.'

With this the old lady bade me adieu. The clock was

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striking twelve as I walked down the village, for the story of Mulcahy always took an hour in the telling, and I went away not quite so down-hearted as when the present was first made to me. 'After all,' thought I, 'a diamond-pin is a handsome thing, and will give me a *distingué* air, though my clothes be never so shabby'—and shabby they were without any doubt. 'Well,' I said, 'three guineas, which I shall have over, will buy me a couple of pairs of what-d'ye-call-'ems;' of which, *entre nous*, I was in great want, having just then done growing, whereas my pantaloons were made a good eighteen months before.

Well, I walked down the village, my hands in my breeches pockets; I had poor Mary's purse there, having removed the little things which she gave me the day before, and placed them—never mind where: but look you, in those days I had a heart, and a warm one too. I had Mary's purse ready for my aunt's donation, which never came, and with my own little stock of money besides, that Mrs. Hoggarty's card-parties had lessened by a good five-and-twenty shillings, I calculated that, after paying my fare, I should get to town with a couple of seven-shilling pieces in my pocket.

I walked down the village at a deuce of a pace; so quick that, if the thing had been possible, I should have overtaken ten o'clock, that had passed by me two hours ago, when I was listening to Mrs. H.'s long stories over her terrible Rosolio. The truth is, at ten I had an appointment under a certain person's window, who was to have been looking at the moon at that hour, with her pretty quilled night-cap on, and her blessed hair in papers.

There was the window shut, and not so much as a candle in it; and though I hemmed and hawed, and whistled over the garden paling, and sang a song of which Somebody was very fond, and even threw a pebble at the window, which hit it exactly at the opening of the lattice,—I woke no one except a great brute of a house-

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dog, that yelled, and howled, and bounced so at me over the rails, that I thought every moment he would have had my nose between his teeth.

So I was obliged to go off as quickly as might be; and the next morning Mamma and my sisters made breakfast for me at four, and at five came the 'True Blue' light six-in-side post-coach to London, and I got up on the roof without having seen Mary Smith.

As we passed the house, it *did* seem as if the window curtain in her room was drawn aside just a little bit. Certainly the window was open, and it had been shut the night before: but away went the coach; and the village, cottage, and the churchyard, and Hicks's hayricks were soon out of sight.

. . . . . .

'My hi, what a pin!' said a stable-boy, who was smoking a cigar, to the guard, looking at me and putting his finger to his nose.

The fact is, that I had never undressed since my aunt's party; and being uneasy in mind, and having all my clothes to pack up, and thinking of something else, had quite forgotten Mrs. Hoggarty's brooch, which I had stuck into my shirt-frill the night before.

CHAPTER II

TELLS HOW THE DIAMOND IS BROUGHT UP TO LONDON, AND PRODUCES WONDERFUL EFFECTS BOTH IN THE CITY AND AT THE WEST END

THE circumstances recorded in this story took place some score of years ago, when, as the reader may remember, there was a great mania in the City of London for establishing companies of all sorts; by which many people made pretty fortunes.

I was at this period, as the truth must be known,

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thirteenth clerk of twenty-four young gents who did the immense business of the Independent West Diddlesex Fire and Life Insurance Company, at their splendid stone mansion in Cornhill. Mamma had sunk a sum of four hundred pounds in the purchase of an annuity at this office, which paid her no less than six-and-thirty pounds a year when no other company in London would give her more than twenty-four. The chairman of the directors was the great Mr. Brough, of the house of Brough & Hoff, Crutched Friars, Turkey Merchants. It was a new house, but did a tremendous business in the fig and sponge way, and more in the Zante currant line than any other firm in the City.

Brough was a great man among the Dissenting connection, and you saw his name for hundreds at the head of every charitable society patronised by those good people. He had nine clerks residing at his office in Crutched Friars; he would not take one without a certificate from the schoolmaster and clergyman of his native place, strongly vouching for his morals and doctrine; and the places were so run after, that he got a premium of four or five hundred pounds with each young gent, whom he made to slave for ten hours a day, and to whom in compensation he taught all the mysteries of the Turkish business. He was a great man on 'Change, too; and our young chaps used to hear from the stockbrokers' clerks (we commonly dined together at the 'Cock and Woolpack,' a respectable house, where you get a capital cut of meat, bread, vegetables, cheese, half-a-pint of porter, and a penny to the waiter, for a shilling)—the young stockbrokers used to tell us of immense bargains in Spanish, Greek, and Columbians, that Brough made. Hoff had nothing to do with them, but stopped at home minding exclusively the business of the house. He was a young chap, very quiet and steady, of the Quaker persuasion, and had been taken into partnership by Brough for a matter of thirty thousand

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pounds: and a very good bargain too. I was told in the strictest confidence that the house one year with another divided a good seven thousand pounds: of which Brough had half, Hoff two-sixths, and the other sixth went to old Tudlow, who had been Mr. Brough's clerk before the new partnership began. Tudlow always went about very shabby, and we thought him an old miser. One of our gents, Bob Swinney by name, used to say that Tudlow's share was all nonsense, and that Brough had it all; but Bob was always too knowing by half, used to wear a green cutaway coat, and had his free admission to Covent Garden Theatre. He was always talking down at the shop, as we called it (it wasn't a shop, but as splendid an office as any in Cornhill)—he was always talking about Vestris and Miss Tree, and singing

'The bramble, the bramble,
The jolly, jolly bramble!'

one of Charles Kemble's famous songs in 'Maid Marian;' a play that was all the rage then, taken from a famous story-book by one Peacock, a clerk in the India House; and a precious good place he has too.

When Brough heard how Master Swinney abused him, and had his admission to the theatre, he came one day down to the office where we all were, four-and-twenty of us, and made one of the most beautiful speeches I ever heard in my life. He said that for slander he did not care, contumely was the lot of every public man who had austere principles of his own, and acted by them austerely; but what he *did* care for was the character of every single gentleman forming a part of the Independent West Diddlesex Association. The welfare of thousands was in their keeping; millions of money were daily passing through their hands; the City—the country looked upon them for order, honesty, and good example. And if he found amongst those whom he considered as

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his children—those whom he loved as his own flesh and blood—that that order was departed from, that that regularity was not maintained, that that good example was not kept up (Mr. B. always spoke in this emphatic way)—if he found his children departing from the wholesome rules of morality, religion, and decorum—if he found in high or low—in the head clerk at six hundred a year down to the porter who cleaned the steps—if he found the slightest taint of dissipation, he would cast the offender from him—yea, though he were his own son, he would cast him from him!

As he spoke this, Mr. Brough burst into tears; and we who didn't know what was coming, looked at each other as pale as parsnips: all except Swinney, who was twelfth clerk, and made believe to whistle. When Mr. B. had wiped his eyes and recovered himself, he turned round; and oh, how my heart thumped as he looked me full in the face! How it was relieved, though, when he shouted out in a thundering voice—

'Mr. ROBERT SWINNEY!'

'Sir to you,' says Swinney, as cool as possible, and some of the chaps began to titter.

'Mr. SWINNEY!' roared Brough, in a voice still bigger than before, 'when you came into this office—this family, sir, for such it is, as I am proud to say—you found three-and-twenty as pious and well-regulated young men as ever laboured together—as ever had confided to them the wealth of this mighty capital and famous empire. You found, sir, sobriety, regularity, and decorum; no profane songs were uttered in this place sacred to—to business; no slanders were whispered against the heads of the establishment—but over them I pass: I can afford, sir, to pass them by—no worldly conversation or foul jesting disturbed the attention of these gentlemen, or desecrated the peaceful scene of their labours. You found Christians and gentlemen, sir!'

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'I paid for my place like the rest,' said Swinney. 'Didn't my governor take sha——?'

'Silence, sir! Your worthy father did take shares in this establishment, which will yield him one day an immense profit. He *did* take shares, sir, or you never would have been here. I glory in saying that every one of my young friends around me has a father, a brother, a dear relative or friend, who is connected in a similar way with our glorious enterprise; and that not one of them is there but has an interest in procuring, at a liberal commission, other persons to join the ranks of our Association. *But*, sir, I am its chief. You will find, sir, your appointment signed by me; and in like manner, I, John Brough, annul it. Go from us, sir!—leave us—quit a family that can no longer receive you in its bosom! Mr. Swinney, I have wept—I have prayed, sir, before I came to this determination; I have taken counsel, sir, and am resolved. *Depart from out of us!*'

'Not without three months' salary, though, Mr. B.: that cock won't fight!'

'They shall be paid to your father, sir.'

'My father be hanged! I tell you what, Brough, I'm of age: and if you don't pay me my salary, I'll arrest you,—by Jingo, I will! I'll have you in quod, or my name's not Bob Swinney!'

'Make out a cheque, Mr. Roundhand, for the three months' salary of this perverted young man.'

'Twenty-one pun' five, Roundhand, and nothing for the stamp!' cried out that audacious Swinney. 'There it is, sir, *re*-ceipted. You needn't cross it to my banker's. And if any of you gents like a glass of punch this evening at eight o'clock, Bob Swinney's your man, and nothing to pay. If Mr. Brough *would* do me the honour to come in and take a whack? Come, don't say no, if you'd rather not!'

We couldn't stand this impudence, and all burst out laughing like mad.

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'Leave the room!' yelled Mr. Brough, whose face had turned quite blue; and so Bob took his white hat off the peg, and strolled away with his 'tile,' as he called it, very much on one side. When he was gone, Mr. Brough gave us another lecture, by which we all determined to profit; and going up to Roundhand's desk, put his arm round his neck, and looked over the ledger.

'What money has been paid in to-day, Roundhand?' he said, in a very kind way.

'The widow, sir, came with her money; nine hundred and four ten and six—say £904, 10s. 6d. Captain Sparr, sir, paid his shares up; grumbles, though, and says he's no more: fifty shares, two instalments—three fifties, sir.'

'He's always grumbling!'

'He says he has not a shilling to bless himself with until our dividend day.'

'Any more?'

Mr. Roundhand went through the book, and made it up nineteen hundred pounds in all. We were doing a famous business now; though when I came into the office, we used to sit, and laugh, and joke, and read the newspapers all day; bustling into our seats whenever a stray customer came. Brough never cared about our laughing and singing *then*, and was hand and glove with Bob Swinney; but that was in early times, before we were well in harness.

'Nineteen hundred pounds, and a thousand pounds in shares. Bravo, Roundhand—bravo, gentlemen! Remember every share you bring in brings you five per cent. down on the nail! Look to your friends—stick to your desks—be regular—I hope none of you forget church. Who takes Mr. Swinney's place?'

'Mr. Samuel Titmarsh, sir.'

'Mr. Titmarsh, I congratulate you. Give me your hand, sir: you are now twelfth clerk of this Association,

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and your salary is consequently increased five pounds a year. How is your worthy mother, sir—your dear and excellent parent? In good health I trust? And long—long, I fervently pray, may this office continue to pay her annuity! Remember, if she has more money to lay out, there is higher interest than the last for her, for she is a year older; and five per cent. for you, my boy! Why not you as well as another? Young men will be young men, and a ten-pound note does no harm. Does it, Mr. Abednego?'

'Oh, no!' says Abednego, who was third clerk, and who was the chap that informed against Swinney; and he began to laugh, as indeed we all did whenever Mr. Brough made anything like a joke: not that they *were* jokes; only we used to know it by his face.

'Oh, by-the-bye, Roundhand,' says he, 'a word with you on business. Mrs. Brough wants to know why the deuce you never come down to Fulham?'

'Law, that's very polite!' said Mr. Roundhand, quite pleased.

'Name your day, my boy! Say Saturday, and bring your nightcap with you.'

'You're very polite, I'm sure. I should be delighted beyond anything, but——'

'But—no buts, my boy! Hark ye! the Chancellor of the Exchequer does me the honour to dine with us, and I want you to see him; for the truth is, I have bragged about you to his Lordship as the best actuary in the three kingdoms.'

Roundhand could not refuse such an invitation as *that*, though he had told us how Mrs. R. and he were going to pass Saturday and Sunday at Putney; and we who knew what a life the poor fellow led, were sure that the head-clerk would be prettily scolded by his lady when she heard what was going on. She disliked Mrs. Brough very much, that was the fact; because Mrs. B. kept a carriage, and said she didn't know where

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Pentonville was, and couldn't call on Mrs. Roundhand. Though, to be sure, her coachman might have found out the way.

'And oh, Roundhand!' continued our governor, 'draw a cheque for seven hundred, will you! Come, don't stare, man; I'm not going to run away! That's right,—seven hundred—and ninety, say, while you're about it! Our board meets on Saturday, and never fear I'll account for it to them before I drive you down. We shall take up the Chancellor at Whitehall.'

So saying, Mr. Brough folded up the cheque, and shaking hands with Mr. Roundhand very cordially, got into his carriage-and-four (he always drove four horses even in the City, where it's so difficult), which was waiting at the office-door for him.

Bob Swinney used to say that he charged two of the horses to the Company; but there was never believing half of what that Bob said, he used to laugh and joke so. I don't know how it was, but I and a gent by the name of Hoskins (eleventh clerk), who lived together with me in Salisbury Square, Fleet Street—where we occupied a very genteel two-pair—found our flute duet rather tiresome that evening, and as it was a very fine night, strolled out for a walk West End way. When we arrived opposite Covent Garden Theatre we found ourselves close to the 'Globe Tavern,' and recollected Bob Swinney's hospitable invitation. We never fancied that he had meant the invitation in earnest, but thought we might as well look in: at any rate there could be no harm in doing so.

There, to be sure, in the back drawing-room, where he said he would be, we found Bob at the head of a table, and in the midst of a great smoke of cigars, and eighteen of our gents rattling and banging away at the table with the bottoms of their glasses.

What a shout they made as we came in! 'Hurray!' says Bob, 'here's two more! Two more chairs, Mary,

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two more tumblers, two more hot waters, and two more goes of gin! Who would have thought of seeing Tit, in the name of goodness?'

'Why,' said I, 'we only came in by the merest chance.'

At this word there was another tremendous roar: and it is a positive fact, that every man of the eighteen had said he came by chance! However, chance gave us a very jovial night; and that hospitable Bob Swinney paid every shilling of the score.

'Gentlemen!' says he, as he paid the bill, 'I'll give you the health of John Brough, Esquire, and thanks to him for the present of £21, 5s. which he made me this morning. What do I say—£21, 5s.? That and a month's salary that I should have had to pay—forfeit—down on the nail, by Jingo! for leaving the shop, as I intended to do to-morrow morning. I've got a place—a tip-top place, I tell you. Five guineas a week, six journeys a year, my own horse and gig, and to travel in the West of England in oil and spermaceti. Here's confusion to gas, and the health of Messrs. Gann & Co., of Thames Street, in the City of London!'

I have been thus particular in my account of the West Diddlesex Insurance Office, and of Mr. Brough, the managing director (though the real names are neither given to the office nor to the chairman, as you may be sure), because the fate of me and my diamond-pin was mysteriously bound up with both: as I am about to show.

You must know that I was rather respected among our gents at the West Diddlesex, because I came of a better family than most of them; had received a classical education; and especially because I had a rich aunt, Mrs. Hoggarty, about whom, as must be confessed, I used to boast a good deal. There is no harm in being respected in this world, as I have found out; and if you don't brag a little for yourself, depend on it there is no

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person of your acquaintance who will tell the world of your merits, and take the trouble off your hands.

So that when I came back to the office after my visit at home, and took my seat at the old day-book opposite the dingy window that looks into Birchin Lane, I pretty soon let the fellows know that Mrs. Hoggarty, though she had not given me a large sum of money, as I expected —indeed, I had promised a dozen of them a treat down the river, should the promised riches have come to me— I let them know, I say, that though my aunt had not given me any money, she had given me a splendid diamond, worth at least thirty guineas, and that some day I would sport it at the shop.

'Oh, let's see it!' says Abednego, whose father was a mock-jewel and gold-lace merchant in Hanway Yard; and I promised that he should have a sight of it as soon as it was set. As my pocket-money was run out too (by coach-hire to and from home, five shillings to our maid at home, ten to my aunt's maid and man, five-and-twenty shillings lost at whist, as I said, and fifteen-and-six paid for a silver scissors for the dear little fingers of Somebody), Roundhand, who was very good-natured, asked me to dine, and advanced me £7, 1s. 8d., a month's salary. It was at Roundhand's house, Myddelton Square, Pentonville, over a fillet of veal and bacon and a glass of port, that I learned and saw how his wife ill-treated him; as I have told before. Poor fellow!—we under-clerks all thought it was a fine thing to sit at a desk by oneself, and have £50 per month, as Roundhand had; but I've a notion that Hoskins and I, blowing duets on the flute together in our second floor in Salisbury Square, were a great deal more at ease than our head—and more in *harmony* too; though we made sad work of the music, certainly.

One day Gus Hoskins and I asked leave from Roundhand to be off at three o'clock, as we had *particular business* at the West End. He knew it was about the

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great Hoggarty diamond, and gave us permission; so off we set. When we reached St. Martin's Lane, Gus got a cigar, to give himself as it were a *distingué* air, and puffed at it all the way up the Lane, and through the alleys into Coventry Street, where Mr. Polonius's shop is, as everybody knows.

The door was open, and a number of carriages full of ladies were drawing up and setting down. Gus kept his hands in his pockets—trousers were worn very full then, with large tucks, and pigeon-holes for your boots, or Bluchers, to come through (the fashionables wore boots, but we chaps in the City, on £80 a year, contented ourselves with Bluchers); and as Gus stretched out his pantaloons as wide as he could from his hips, and kept blowing away at his cheroot, and clamping with the iron heels of his boots, and had very large whiskers for so young a man, he really looked quite the genteel thing, and was taken by everybody to be a person of consideration.

He would not come into the shop though, but stood staring at the gold pots and kettles in the window outside. I went in; and after a little hemming and hawing—for I had never been at such a fashionable place before—asked one of the gentlemen to let me speak to Mr. Polonius.

'What can I do for you, sir?' says Mr. Polonius, who was standing close by, as it happened, serving three ladies,—a very old one and two young ones, who were examining pearl necklaces very attentively.

'Sir,' said I, producing my jewel out of my coat-pocket, 'this jewel has, I believe, been in your house before: it belonged to my aunt, Mrs. Hoggarty, of Castle Hoggarty.' The old lady standing near looked round as I spoke.

'I sold her a gold neck-chain and repeating watch in the year 1795,' said Mr. Polonius, who made it a point to recollect everything; 'and a silver punch-ladle to the

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"As I live, it's the great Hoggarty diamond!"

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Captain. How is the Major—Colonel—General—eh, sir?'

'The General,' said I, 'I am sorry to say'—though I was quite proud that this man of fashion should address me so—'Mr. Hoggarty is—no more. My aunt has made me a present, however, of this—this trinket—which, as you see, contains her husband's portrait, that I will thank you, sir, to preserve for me very carefully; and she wishes that you would set this diamond neatly.'

'Neatly and handsomely, of course, sir.'

'Neatly, in the present fashion; and send down the account to her. There is a great deal of gold about the trinket, for which, of course, you will make an allowance.'

'To the last fraction of a sixpence,' says Mr. Polonius, bowing, and looking at the jewel. 'It a wonderful piece of goods, certainly,' said he; 'though the diamond's a neat little bit, certainly. Do, my Lady, look at it. The thing is of Irish manufacture, bears the stamp of '95, and will recall, perhaps, the times of your ladyship's earliest youth.

'Get ye out, Mr. Polonius!' said the old lady, a little wizen-faced old lady, with her face puckered up in a million of wrinkles. 'How *dar* you, sir, to talk such nonsense to an old woman like me? Wasn't I fifty years old in '95, and a grandmother in '96?' She put out a pair of withered, trembling hands, took up the locket, examined it for a minute, and then burst out laughing: 'As I live, it's the great Hoggarty diamond.'

Good heavens! what was this talisman that had come into my possession?

'Look, girls,' continued the old lady: 'this is the great jew'l of all Ireland. This red-faced man in the middle is poor Mick Hoggarty, a cousin of mine, who was in love with me in the year '84, when I had just lost your poor dear grandpapa. These thirteen sthreamers of red

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hair represent his thirteen celebrated sisters,—Biddy, Minny, Thedy, Widdy (short for Williamina), Freddy, Izzy, Tizzy, Mysie, Grizzy, Polly, Dolly, Nell, and Bell—all married, all ugly, and all carr'ty hair. And of which are you the son, young man?—though, to do you justice, you're not like the family.'

Two pretty young ladies turned two pretty pairs of black eyes at me, and waited for an answer; which they would have had, only the old lady began rattling on a hundred stories about the thirteen ladies above named, and all their lovers, all their disappointments, and all the duels of Mick Hoggarty. She was a chronicle of fifty-years-old scandal. At last she was interrupted by a violent fit of coughing; at the conclusion of which Mr. Polonius very respectfully asked me where he should send the pin, and whether I would like the hair kept.

'No,' says I, 'never mind the hair.'

'And the pin, sir?'

I had felt ashamed about telling my address: 'But, hang it!' thought I, 'why *should* I?—

"A king can make a belted knight,
A marquis, duke, and a' that;
An honest man's abune his might—
Gude faith, he canna fa' that."

Why need I care about telling these ladies where I live?'

'Sir,' says I, 'have the goodness to send the parcel, when done, to Mr. Titmarsh, No. 3 Bell Lane, Salisbury Square, near St. Bride's Church, Fleet Street. Ring, if you please, the two-pair bell.'

'*What*, sir?' said Mr. Polonius.

'*Hwat!*' shrieked the old lady. 'Mr. Hwat? Mais, ma chère, c'est impayable. Come along—here's the carr'age! Give me your arm, Mr. Hwat, and get inside, and tell me all about your thirteen aunts.'

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She seized on my elbow and hobbled through the shop as fast as possible; the young ladies following her, laughing.

'Now, jump in, do you hear?' said she, poking her sharp nose out of the window.

'I can't, ma'am,' says I; 'I have a friend.'

'Pooh, pooh! send 'um to the juice, and jump in!' And before almost I could say a word, a great powdered fellow in yellow-plush breeches pushed me up the steps and banged the door to.

I looked just for one minute as the barouche drove away at Hoskins, and never shall forget his figure. There stood Gus, his mouth wide open, his eyes staring, a smoking cheroot in his hand, wondering with all his might at the strange thing that had just happened to me.

'Who *is* that, Titmarsh?' says Gus: 'there's a coronet on the carriage, by Jingo!'

CHAPTER III

HOW THE POSSESSOR OF THE DIAMOND IS WHISKED INTO A MAGNIFICENT CHARIOT, AND HAS YET FURTHER GOOD LUCK

I SAT on the back seat of the carriage, near a very nice young lady, about my dear Mary's age—that is to say, seventeen and three-quarters; and opposite us sat the old Countess and her other grand-daughter—handsome too, but ten years older. I recollect I had on that day my blue coat and brass buttons, nankeen trousers, a white sprig waistcoat, and one of Dando's silk hats, that had just come in in the year '22, and looked a great deal more glossy than the best beaver.

'And who was that hidjus manster'—that was the way her Ladyship pronounced,—'that ojous vulgar wretch, with the iron heels to his boots, and the big

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mouth, and the imitation goold neck-chain, who *steered* at us so as we got into the carr'age ?'

How she should have known that Gus's chain was mosaic I can't tell ; but so it was, and we had bought it for five-and-twenty and sixpence only the week before at M'Phail's, in St. Paul's Churchyard. But I did not like to hear my friend abused, and so spoke out for him—

'Ma'am,' says I, 'that young gentleman's name is Augustus Hoskins. We live together ; and a better or more kind-hearted fellow does not exist.'

'You are quite right to stand up for your friends, sir,' said the second lady ; whose name, it appears, was Lady Jane, but whom the grandmamma called Lady Jene.

'Well, upon me canscience, so he is now, Lady Jene ; and I like sper't in a young man. So his name is Hoskins, is it ? I know, my dears, all the Hoskinses in England. There are the Lincolnshire Hoskinses, the Shropshire Hoskinses : they say the Admiral's daughter, Bell, was in love with a black footman, or boatswain, or some such thing ; but the world's so censorious. There's old Doctor Hoskins of Bath, who attended poor dear Drum in the quinsy ; and poor dear old Fred Hoskins, the gouty General : I remember him as thin as a lath in the year '84, and as active as a harlequin, and in love with me—oh, how he was in love with me !'

'You seem to have had a host of admirers in those days, grandmamma ?' said Lady Jane.

'Hundreds, my dear,—hundreds of thousands. I was the toast of Bath, and a great beauty, too : would you ever have thought it now, upon your conscience and without flattery, Mr.-a-What-d'ye-call-'im ?'

'Indeed, ma'am, I never should,' I answered, for the old lady was as ugly as possible ; and at my saying this the two young ladies began screaming with laughter, and I saw the two great-whiskered footmen grinning over the back of the carriage.

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'Upon my word, you're mighty candid, Mr. What's-your-name—mighty candid indeed; but I like candour in young people. But a beauty I was. Just ask your friend's uncle the General. He's one of the Lincolnshire Hoskinses—I knew he was by the strong family likeness. Is he the eldest son? It's a pretty property, though sadly encumbered; for old Sir George was the divvle of a man—a friend of Hanbury Williams, and Lyttleton, and those horrid, monstrous, ojous people! How much will he have now, mister, when the Admiral dies?'

'Why, ma'am, I can't say; but the Admiral is not my friend's father.'

'Not his father?—but he *is*, I tell you, and I'm never wrong. Who is his father, then?'

'Ma'am, Gus's father's a leatherseller in Skinner Street, Snow Hill,—a very respectable house, ma'am. But Gus is only third son, and so can't expect a great share in the property.'

The two young ladies smiled at this—the old lady said, 'Hwat?'

'I like you, sir,' Lady Jane said, 'for not being ashamed of your friends, whatever their rank of life may be. Shall we have the pleasure of setting you down anywhere, Mr. Titmarsh?'

'Noways particular, my Lady,' says I. 'We have a holiday at our office to-day—at least Roundhand gave me and Gus leave; and I shall be very happy, indeed, to take a drive in the Park, if it's no offence.'

'I'm sure it will give us—infinite pleasure,' said Lady Jane; though rather in a grave way.

'Oh, that it will!' says Lady Fanny, clapping her hands: 'won't it, grandmamma? And after we have been in the Park, we can walk in Kensington Gardens, if Mr. Titmarsh will be good enough to accompany us.'

'Indeed, Fanny, we will do no such thing,' says Lady Jane.

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'Indeed, but we will though!' shrieked out Lady Drum. 'Ain't I dying to know everything about his uncle and thirteen aunts? and you're all chattering so, you young women, that not a blessed syllable will you allow me or my young friend here to speak.'

Lady Jane gave a shrug with her shoulders, and did not say a single word more. Lady Fanny, who was as gay as a young kitten (if I may be allowed so to speak of the aristocracy), laughed, and blushed, and giggled, and seemed quite to enjoy her sister's ill-humour. And the Countess began at once, and entered into the history of the thirteen Misses Hoggarty, which was not near finished when we entered the Park.

When there, you can't think what hundreds of gents on horseback came to the carriage and talked to the ladies. They had their joke for Lady Drum, who seemed to be a character in her way; their bow for Lady Jane; and, the young ones especially, their compliment for Lady Fanny.

Though she bowed and blushed as a young lady should, Lady Fanny seemed to be thinking of something else; for she kept her head out of the carriage, looking eagerly among the horsemen, as if she expected to see somebody. Aha! my Lady Fanny, *I* knew what it meant when a young pretty lady like you was absent, and on the look-out, and only half answered the questions put to her. Let alone Sam Titmarsh—he knows what *Somebody* means as well as another, I warrant. As I saw these manœuvres going on, I could not help just giving a wink to Lady Jane, as much as to say I knew what was what. 'I guess the young lady is looking for Somebody,' says I. It was then *her* turn to look queer, I assure you, and she blushed as red as scarlet; but, after a minute, the good-natured little thing looked at her sister, and both the young ladies put their handkerchiefs up to their faces, and began laughing—laughing as if I had said the funniest thing in the world.

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'Il est charmant, votre monsieur,' said Lady Jane to her grandmamma; and on which I bowed, and said, 'Madame, vous me faites beaucoup d'honneur;' for I know the French language, and was pleased to find that these good ladies had taken a liking to me. 'I'm a poor humble lad, ma'am, not used to London society, and do really feel it quite kind of you to take me by the hand so, and give me a drive in your fine carriage.'

At this minute a gentleman on a black horse, with a pale face and a tuft to his chin, came riding up to the carriage; and I knew by a little start that Lady Fanny gave, and by her instantly looking round the other way, that *Somebody* was come at last.

'Lady Drum,' said he, 'your most devoted servant! I have just been riding with a gentleman who almost shot himself for love of the beautiful Countess of Drum in the year—never mind the year.'

'Was it Killblazes?' said the lady: 'he's a dear old man, and I'm quite ready to go off with him this minute. Or was it that delight of an old bishop? He's got a lock of my hair now—I gave it him when he was papa's chaplain; and let me tell you it would be a hard matter to find another now in the same place.'

'Law, my Lady!' says I, 'you don't say so?'

'But indeed I do, my good sir,' says she, 'for between ourselves, my head's as bare as a cannon-ball—ask Fanny if it isn't. Such a fright as the poor thing got when she was a babby, and came upon me suddenly in my dressing-room without my wig!'

'I hope Lady Fanny has recovered from the shock,' said 'Somebody,' looking first at her, and then at me as if he had a mind to swallow me. And would you believe it? all that Lady Fanny could say was, 'Pretty well, I thank you, my Lord;' and she said this with as much fluttering and blushing as we used to say our Virgil at school—when we hadn't learned it.

My Lord still kept on looking very fiercely at me, and

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muttered something about having hoped to find a seat in Lady Drum's carriage, as he was tired of riding; on which Lady Fanny muttered something too, about 'a friend of grandmamma's.'

'You should say a friend of yours, Fanny,' says Lady Jane: 'I am sure we should never have come to the Park if Fanny had not insisted upon bringing Mr. Titmarsh hither. Let me introduce the Earl of Tiptoff to Mr. Titmarsh.' But, instead of taking off his hat, as I did mine, his Lordship growled out that he hoped for another opportunity, and galloped off again on his black horse. Why the deuce *I* should have offended him I never could understand.

But it seemed as if I was destined to offend all the men that day; for who should presently come up but the Right Honourable Edmund Preston, one of His Majesty's Secretaries of State (as I knew very well by the almanac in our office) and the husband of Lady Jane.

The Right Honourable Edmund was riding a grey cob, and was a fat pale-faced man, who looked as if he never went into the open air. 'Who the devil's that?' said he to his wife, looking surlily both at me and her.

'Oh, it's a friend of grandmamma's and Jane's,' said Lady Fanny at once, looking, like a sly rogue as she was, quite archly at her sister—who in her turn appeared quite frightened, and looked imploringly at her sister, and never dared to breathe a syllable. 'Yes, indeed,' continued Lady Fanny, 'Mr. Titmarsh is a cousin of grandmamma's by the mother's side: by the Hoggarty side. Didn't you know the Hoggarties when you were in Ireland, Edmund, with Lord Bagwig? Let me introduce you to grandmamma's cousin, Mr. Titmarsh: Mr. Titmarsh, my brother, Mr. Edmund Preston.'

There was Lady Jane all the time treading upon her sister's foot as hard as possible, and the little wicked thing would take no notice; and I, who had never heard of the cousinship, feeling as confounded as could be. But

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I did not know the Countess of Drum near so well as that sly minx her grand-daughter did: for the old lady, who had just before called poor Gus Hoskins her cousin, had, it appeared, the mania of fancying all the world related to her, and said—

'Yes, we're cousins, and not very far removed. Mick Hoggarty's grandmother was Millicent Brady, and she and my Aunt Towzer were related, as all the world knows; for Decimus Brady, of Ballybrady, married an own cousin of Aunt Towzer's mother, Bell Swift—that was no relation of the Dean's, my love, who came but of a so-so family—and isn't *that* clear?'

'Oh, perfectly, grandmamma,' said Lady Jane, laughing, while the right honourable gent still rode by us, looking sour and surly.

'And sure you knew the Hoggarties, Edmund?—the thirteen red-haired girls—the nine graces, and four over, as poor Clanboy used to call them. Poor Clan! a cousin of yours and mine, Mr. Titmarsh, and sadly in love with me he was too. Not remember them *all* now, Edmund?—not remember?—not remember Biddy and Minny, and Thedy and Widdy, and Mysie and Grizzy, and Polly and Dolly, and the rest?'

'D—— the Miss Hoggarties, ma'am,' said the right honourable gent; and he said it with such energy, that his grey horse gave a sudden lash out that well-nigh sent him over his head. Lady Jane screamed; Lady Fanny laughed; old Lady Drum looked as if she did not care twopence, and said, 'Serve you right for swearing, you ojous man you!'

'Hadn't you better come into the carriage, Edmund—Mr. Preston?' cried out the lady anxiously.

'Oh, I'm sure I'll slip out, ma'am,' says I.

'Pooh—pooh! don't stir,' said Lady Drum: 'it's my carriage, and if Mr. Preston chooses to swear at a lady of my years in that ojous vulgar way—in that ojous vulgar way, I repeat—I don't see why my friends should

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be inconvenienced for him. Let him sit on the dickey if he likes, or come in and ride bodkin.' It was quite clear that my Lady Drum hated her grandson-in-law heartily; and I've remarked somehow in families that this kind of hatred is by no means uncommon.

Mr. Preston, one of His Majesty's Secretaries of State, was, to tell the truth, in a great fright upon his horse, and was glad to get away from the kicking, plunging brute. His pale face looked still paler than before, and his hands and legs trembled, as he dismounted from the cob and gave the reins to his servant. I disliked the looks of the chap—of the master, I mean—at the first moment he came up, when he spoke rudely to that nice gentle wife of his; and I thought he was a cowardly fellow, as the adventure of the cob showed him to be. Heaven bless you! a baby could have ridden it; and here was the man with his soul in his mouth at the very first kick.

'Oh, quick! *do* come in, Edmund,' said Lady Fanny, laughing: and the carriage steps being let down, and giving me a great scowl as he came in, he was going to place himself in Lady Fanny's corner (I warrant you I wouldn't budge from mine), when the little rogue cried out, 'Oh, no! by no means, Mr. Preston. Shut the door, Thomas. And oh! what fun it will be to show all the world a Secretary of State riding bodkin!'

And pretty glum the Secretary of State looked, I assure you!

'Take my place, Edmund, and don't mind Fanny's folly,' said Lady Jane timidly.

'Oh no! Pray, madam, don't stir! I'm comfortable, very comfortable; and so I hope is this Mr.—this gentleman.'

'Perfectly, I assure you,' says I. 'I was going to offer to ride your horse home for you, as you seemed to be rather frightened at it; but the fact was, I was so comfortable here that really I *couldn't* move.'

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Such a grin as old Lady Drum gave when I said that! —how her little eyes twinkled, and her little sly mouth puckered up! I couldn't help speaking, for, look you, my blood was up.

'We shall always be happy of your company, Cousin Titmarsh,' says she; and handed me a gold snuff-box, out of which I took a pinch, and sneezed with the air of a lord.

'As you have invited this gentleman into your carriage, Lady Jane Preston, hadn't you better invite him home to dinner?' says Mr. Preston, quite blue with rage.

'I invited him into *my* carr'age,' says the old lady; 'and as we are going to dine at your house, and you press it, I'm sure I shall be very happy to see him there.'

'I'm very sorry I'm engaged,' said I.

'Oh, indeed, what a pity!' says Right Honourable Ned, still glowering at his wife. 'What a pity that this gentleman—I forget his name—that your friend, Lady Jane, is engaged! I am sure you would have had such gratification in meeting your relation in Whitehall.'

Lady Drum was over-fond of finding out relations, to be sure; but this speech of Right Honourable Ned's was rather too much.

'Now, Sam,' says I, 'be a man and show your spirit!'

So I spoke up at once, and said, 'Why, ladies, as the right honourable gent is so *very* pressing, I'll give up my engagement, and shall have sincere pleasure in cutting mutton with him. What's your hour, sir?'

He didn't condescend to answer, and for me I did not care; for, you see, I did not intend to dine with the man, but only to give him a lesson of manners. For though I am but a poor fellow, and hear people cry out how vulgar it is to eat peas with a knife, or ask three times for cheese, and such like points of ceremony, there's something, I think, much more vulgar than all this, and that is, insolence to one's inferiors. I hate the chap that uses it, as I scorn him of humble rank that

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affects to be of the fashion; and so I determined to let Mr. Preston know a piece of my mind.

When the carriage drove up to his house, I handed out the ladies as politely as possible, and walked into the hall, and then, taking hold of Mr. Preston's button at the door, I said, before the ladies and the two big servants—upon my word I did—'Sir,' says I, 'this kind old lady asked me into her carriage, and I rode in it to please her, not myself. When you came up and asked who the devil I was, I thought you might have put the question in a more polite manner; but it wasn't my business to speak. When, by way of a joke, you invited me to dinner, I thought I would answer in a joke too, and here I am. But don't be frightened; I'm not a-going to dine with you: only if you play the same joke upon other parties—on some of the chaps in our office, for example—I recommend you to have a care, or they will *take you at your word*.'

'Is that all, sir?' says Mr. Preston, still in a rage. 'If you have done, will you leave this house, or shall my servants turn you out? Turn out this fellow! do you hear me?' and he broke away from me, and flung into his study in a rage.

'He's an ojous horrid monsther of a man, that husband of yours!' said Lady Drum, seizing hold of her elder granddaughter's arm, 'and I hate him; and so come away, for the dinner 'll be getting cold:' and she was for hurrying away Lady Jane without more ado. But that kind lady, coming forward, looking very pale and trembling, said, 'Mr. Titmarsh, I do hope you'll not be angry—that is, that you'll forget what has happened, for, believe me, it has given me very great——'

Very great what, I never could say, for here the poor thing's eyes filled with tears; and Lady Drum crying out 'Tut, tut! none of this nonsense,' pulled her away by the sleeve, and went upstairs. But little Lady Fanny walked boldly up to me, and held me out her little hand,

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and gave mine such a squeeze and said, 'Good-bye, my dear Mr. Titmarsh,' so very kindly, that I'm blest if I did not blush up to the ears, and all the blood in my body began to tingle.

So, when she was gone, I clapped my hat on my head, and walked out of the hall-door, feeling as proud as a peacock and as brave as a lion; and all I wished for was that one of those saucy, grinning footmen should say or do something to me that was the least uncivil, so that I might have the pleasure of knocking him down, with my best compliments to his master. But neither of them did me any such favour! and I went away, and dined at home off boiled mutton and turnips with Gus Hoskins quite peacefully.

I did not think it was proper to tell Gus (who, between ourselves, is rather curious, and inclined to tittle-tattle) all the particulars of the family quarrel of which I had been the cause and witness, and so just said that the old lady—('They were the Drum arms,' says Gus; 'for I went and looked them out that minute in the "Peerage"')—that the old lady turned out to be a cousin of mine, and that she had taken me to drive in the Park. Next day we went to the office as usual, when you may be sure that Hoskins told everything of what had happened, and a great deal more; and somehow, though I did not pretend to care sixpence about the matter, I must confess that I *was* rather pleased that the gents in our office should hear of a part of my adventure.

But fancy my surprise, on coming home in the evening, to find Mrs. Stokes the landlady, Miss Selina Stokes her daughter, and Master Bob Stokes her son (an idle young vagabond that was always playing marbles on St. Bride's steps and in Salisbury Square),—when I found them all bustling and tumbling up the steps before me to our rooms on the second floor, and there, on the table, between our two flutes on one side,

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my album, Gus's 'Don Juan' and 'Peerage' on the other, I saw as follows:—

1. A basket of great red peaches, looking like the cheeks of my dear Mary Smith.

2. A ditto of large, fat, luscious, heavy-looking grapes.

3. An enormous piece of raw mutton, as I thought it was; but Mrs. Stokes said it was the primest haunch of venison that ever she saw.

And three cards—viz.,

DOWAGER COUNTESS OF DRUM.
LADY FANNY RAKES.

MR. PRESTON.
LADY JANE PRESTON.

EARL OF TIPTOFF.

'Sich a carriage!' says Mrs. Stokes (for that was the way the poor thing spoke). 'Sich a carriage—all over coronites! sich liveries—two great footmen, with red whiskers and yellow-plush small-clothes; and inside, a very old lady in a white poke bonnet, and a young one with a great Leghorn hat and blue ribands, and a great tall pale gentleman with a tuft on his chin.

'"Pray, madam, does Mr. Titmarsh live here?" says the young lady, with her clear voice.

'"Yes, my Lady," says I; "but he's at the office—the West Diddlesex Fire and Life Office, Cornhill."

'"Charles, get out the things,' says the gentleman, quite solemn.

'"Yes, my Lord," says Charles; and brings me out the haunch in a newspaper, and on the chany dish as you see it, and the two baskets of fruit besides.

'"Have the kindness, madam," says my Lord, "to take these things to Mr. Titmarsh's rooms, with our,

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with Lady Jane Preston's compliments, and request his acceptance of them;" and then he pulled out the cards on your table, and this letter, sealed with his Lordship's own crown.'

And herewith Mrs. Stokes gave me a letter, which my wife keeps to this day, by the way, and which runs thus:—

'The Earl of Tiptoff has been commissioned by Lady Jane Preston to express her sincere regret and disappointment that she was not able yesterday to enjoy the pleasure of Mr. Titmarsh's company. Lady Jane is about to leave town immediately: she will therefore be unable to receive her friends in Whitehall Place this season. But Lord Tiptoff trusts that Mr. Titmarsh will have the kindness to accept some of the produce of her Ladyship's garden and park; with which, perhaps, he will entertain some of those friends in whose favour he knows so well how to speak.'

Along with this was a little note, containing the words, 'Lady Drum at home. Friday evening, June 17.' And all this came to me because my aunt Hoggarty had given me a diamond-pin!

I did not send back the venison: as why should I? Gus was for sending it at once to Brough, our director; and the grapes and peaches to my aunt in Somersetshire.

'But no,' says I; 'we'll ask Bob Swinney and half-a-dozen more of our gents; and we'll have a merry night of it on Saturday.' And a merry night we had too; and as we had no wine in the cupboard, we had plenty of ale, and gin-punch afterwards. And Gus sat at the foot of the table, and I at the head; and we sang songs, both comic and sentimental, and drank toasts; and I made a speech that there is no possibility of mentioning here, because, *entre nous*, I had quite forgotten in the morning everything that had taken place after a certain period on the night before.

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CHAPTER IV

HOW THE HAPPY DIAMOND-WEARER DINES AT PENTONVILLE

I DID not go to the office till half-an-hour after opening time on Monday. If the truth must be told, I was not sorry to let Hoskins have the start of me, and tell the chaps what had taken place,—for we all have our little vanities, and I liked to be thought well of by my companions.

When I came in, I saw my business had been done, by the way in which the chaps looked at me; especially Abednego, who offered me a pinch out of his gold snuff-box the very first thing. Roundhand shook me, too, warmly by the hand, when he came round to look over my day-book, said I wrote a capital hand (and indeed I believe I do, without any sort of flattery), and invited me for dinner next Sunday, in Myddelton Square. 'You won't have,' said he, 'quite such a grand turn-out as with *your friends at the West End*'—he said this with a particular accent—'but Amelia and I are always happy to see a friend in our plain way,—pale sherry, old port, and cut and come again. Hey?'

I said I would come, and bring Hoskins too.

He answered that I was very polite, and that he should be very happy to see Hoskins; and we went accordingly at the appointed day and hour; but though Gus was eleventh clerk and I twelfth, I remarked that at dinner I was helped first and best. I had twice as many force-meat balls as Hoskins in my mock-turtle, and pretty nearly all the oysters out of the sauce-boat. Once, Roundhand was going to help Gus before me; when his wife, who was seated at the head of the table, looking very big and fierce in red crape and a turban, shouted out, 'ANTONY!' and poor R. dropped the plate, and

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blushed as red as anything. How Mrs. R. did talk to me about the West End, to be sure! She had a 'Peerage,' as you may be certain, and knew everything about the Drum family in a manner that quite astonished me. She asked me how much Lord Drum had a year; whether I thought he had twenty, thirty, forty, or a hundred and fifty thousand a year; whether I was invited to Drum Castle; what the young ladies wore, and if they had those odious *gigot* sleeves which were just coming in then; and here Mrs. R. looked at a pair of large mottled arms that she was very proud of.

'I say, Sam, my boy!' cried, in the midst of our talk, Mr. Roundhand, who had been passing the port wine round pretty freely, 'I hope you look to the main chance, and put in a few shares of the West Diddlesex, —hey?

'Mr. Roundhand, have you put up the decanters downstairs?' cries the lady, quite angry, and wishing to stop the conversation.

'No, Milly, I've *emptied* 'em,' says R.

'Don't Milly me, sir! and have the goodness to go down and tell Lancy, my maid' (*a look at me*), 'to make the tea in the study. We have a gentleman here who is not *used* to Pentonville ways' (*another look*); 'but he won't mind the ways of *friends*.' And here Mrs. Roundhand heaved her very large chest, and gave me a third look that was so severe, that I declare to goodness it made me look quite foolish. As to Gus, she never so much as spoke to him all the evening; but he consoled himself with a great lot of muffins, and sat most of the evening (it was a cruel hot summer) whistling and talking with Roundhand on the verandah. I think I should like to have been with them,—for it was very close in the room with that great big Mrs. Roundhand squeezing close up to one on the sofa.

'Do you recollect what a jolly night we had here last summer?' I heard Hoskins say, who was leaning

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over the balcony, and ogling the girls coming home from church. 'You and me with our coats off, plenty of cold rum-and-water, Mrs. Roundhand at Margate, and a whole box of Manillas?'

'Hush!' said Roundhand, quite eagerly; 'Milly will hear.'

But Milly didn't hear: for she was occupied in telling me an immense long story about her waltzing with the Count de Schloppenzollern at the City ball to the Allied Sovereigns; and how the Count had great large white moustaches; and how odd she thought it to go whirling round the room with a great man's arm round your waist. 'Mr. Roundhand has never allowed it since our marriage—never; but in the year '14 it was considered a proper compliment, you know, to pay the sovereigns. So twenty-nine young ladies, of the best families in the City of London, I assure you, Mr. Titmarsh—there was the Lord Mayor's own daughters; Alderman Dobbin's gals; Sir Charles Hopper's three, who have the great house in Baker Street; and your humble servant, who was rather slimmer in those days—twenty-nine of us had a dancing-master on purpose, and practised waltzing in a room over the Egyptian Hall at the Mansion House. He was a splendid man, that Count Schloppenzollern!'

'I am sure, ma'am,' says I, 'he had a splendid partner!' and blushed up to my eyes when I said it.

'Get away, you naughty creature!' says Mrs. Roundhand, giving me a great slap: 'you're all the same, you men in the West End—all deceivers. The Count was just like you. Heigho! Before you marry, it's all honey and compliments; when you win us, it's all coldness and indifference. Look at Roundhand, the great baby, trying to beat down a butterfly with his yellow bandanna! Can a man like *that* comprehend me? can he fill the void in my heart?' (She pronounced it without the *h*; but that there should be no mistake, laid

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her hand upon the place meant.) 'Ah, no! Will *you* be so neglectful when *you* marry, Mr. Titmarsh?'

As she spoke, the bells were just tolling the people out of church, and I fell a-thinking of my dear dear Mary Smith in the country, walking home to her grandmother's, in her modest grey cloak, as the bells were chiming, and the air full of the sweet smell of the hay, and the river shining in the sun, all crimson, purple, gold, and silver. There was my dear Mary a hundred and twenty miles off, in Somersetshire, walking home from church along with Mr. Snorter's family, with which she came and went; and I was listening to the talk of this great leering, vulgar woman.

I could not help feeling for a certain half of a sixpence that you have heard me speak of; and putting my hand mechanically upon my chest, I tore my fingers with the point of my new DIAMOND-PIN. Mr. Polonius had sent it home the night before, and I sported it for the first time at Roundhand's to dinner.

'It's a beautiful diamond,' said Mrs. Roundhand. 'I have been looking at it all dinner-time. How rich you must be to wear such splendid things! and how can you remain in a vulgar office in the City—you who have such great acquaintances at the West End?'

The woman had somehow put me in such a passion that I bounced off the sofa, and made for the balcony without answering a word,—ay, and half broke my head against the sash, too, as I went out to the gents in the open air. 'Gus,' says I, 'I feel very unwell: I wish you'd come home with me.' And Gus did not desire anything better; for he had ogled the last girl out of the last church, and the night was beginning to fall.

'What! already?' said Mrs. Roundhand; 'there is a lobster coming up,—a trifling refreshment; not what he's accustomed to, but——'

I am sorry to say I nearly said, 'D—— the lobster!' as Roundhand went and whispered to her that I was ill.

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'Ay,' said Gus, looking very knowing. 'Recollect, Mrs. R., that he was *at the West End* on Thursday, asked to dine, ma'am, with the tip-top nobs. Chaps don't dine at the West End for nothing, do they, R.? If you play at *bowls*, you know——'

'You must look out for *rubbers*,' said Roundhand, as quick as thought.

'Not in my house of a Sunday,' said Mrs. R., looking very fierce and angry. 'Not a card shall be touched *here*. Are we in a Protestant land, sir?—in a Christian country?'

'My dear, you don't understand. We were not talking of rubbers of whist.'

'There shall be *no* game at all in the house of a Sabbath eve,' said Mrs. Roundhand; and out she flounced from the room, without ever so much as wishing us good-night.

'Do stay,' said the husband, looking very much frightened,—'do stay. She won't come back while you're here; and I do wish you'd stay so.

But we wouldn't: and when we reached Salisbury Square, I gave Gus a lecture about spending his Sundays idly; and read out one of Blair's sermons before we went to bed. As I turned over in bed, I could not help thinking about the luck the pin had brought me; and it was not over yet, as you will see in the next chapter.

CHAPTER V

HOW THE DIAMOND INTRODUCES HIM TO A STILL MORE FASHIONABLE PLACE

To tell the truth, though, about the pin, although I mentioned it almost the last thing in the previous chapter, I assure you it was by no means the last thing in my thoughts. It had come home from Mr. Polonius's,

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as I said, on Saturday night; and Gus and I happened to be out enjoying ourselves, half-price, at Sadler's Wells; and perhaps we took a little refreshment on our way back: but that has nothing to do with my story.

On the table, however, was the little box from the jeweller's; and when I took it out,—*my*, how the diamond did twinkle and glitter by the light of our one candle!

'I'm sure it would light up the room of itself,' says Gus. 'I've read they do in—in history.'

It was in the history of Cogia Hassan Alhabbal, in the 'Arabian Nights,' as I knew very well. But we put the candle out, nevertheless, to try.

'Well, I declare to goodness it does illuminate the old place!' says Gus; but the fact was, that there was a gas-lamp opposite our window, and I believe that was the reason why we could see pretty well. At least in my bedroom, to which I was obliged to go without a candle, and of which the window looked out on a dead wall, I could not see a wink, in spite of the Hoggarty diamond, and was obliged to grope about in the dark for a pincushion which Somebody gave me (I don't mind owning it was Mary Smith), and in which I stuck it for the night. But, somehow, I did not sleep much for thinking of it, and woke very early in the morning; and, if the truth must be told, stuck it in my night-gown, like a fool, and admired myself very much in the glass.

Gus admired it as much as I did; for since my return, and especially since my venison dinner and drive with Lady Drum, he thought I was the finest fellow in the world, and boasted about his 'West End friend' everywhere.

As we were going to dine at Roundhand's, and I had no black satin stock to set it off, I was obliged to place it in the frill of my best shirt, which tore the muslin sadly, by the way. However, the diamond had its effect on my entertainers, as we have seen; rather too much,

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perhaps, on one of them; and next day I wore it down at the office, as Gus would make me do; though it did not look near so well in the second day's shirt as on the first day, when the linen was quite clear and bright with Somersetshire washing.

The chaps at the West Diddlesex all admired it hugely, except that snarling Scotchman M'Whirter, fourth clerk, —out of envy because I did not think much of a great yellow stone, named a carum-gorum, or some such thing, which he had in a snuff-mull, as he called it,—all except M'Whirter, I say, were delighted with it; and Abednego himself, who ought to know, as his father was in the line, told me the jewel was worth at least ten poundsh, and that his governor would give me as much for it.

'That's a proof,' says Roundhand, 'that Tit's diamond is worth at least thirty.' And we all laughed, and agreed it was.

Now I must confess that all these praises, and the respect that was paid me, turned my head a little; and as all the chaps said I *must* have a black satin stock to set the stone off, I was fool enough to buy a stock that cost me five-and-twenty shillings, at Ludlam's in Piccadilly: for Gus said I must go to the best place, to be sure, and have none of our cheap and common East End stuff. I might have had one for sixteen and six in Cheapside, every whit as good; but when a young lad becomes vain, and wants to be fashionable, you see he can't help being extravagant.

Our Director, Mr. Brough, did not fail to hear of the haunch of venison business, and my relationship with Lady Drum and the Right Honourable Edmund Preston: only Abednego, who told him, said I was her Ladyship's first cousin; and this made Brough think more of me, and no worse than before.

Mr. B. was, as everybody knows, Member of Parliament for Rottenburgh; and being considered one of the richest men in the city of London, used to receive

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all the great people of the land at his villa at Fulham; and we often read in the papers of the rare doings going on there.

Well, the pin certainly worked wonders: for not content merely with making me a present of a ride in a countess's carriage, of a haunch of venison and two baskets of fruit, and the dinner at Roundhand's above described, my diamond had other honours in store for me, and procured me the honour of an invitation to the house of our director, Mr. Brough.

Once a year, in June, that honourable gent gave a grand ball at his house at Fulham; and by the accounts of the entertainment brought back by one or two of our chaps who had been invited, it was one of the most magnificent things to be seen about London. You saw Members of Parliament there as thick as peas in July, lords and ladies without end. There was everything and everybody of the tip-top sort; and I have heard that Mr. Gunter, of Berkeley Square, supplied the ices, supper, and footmen,—though of the latter Brough kept a plenty, but not enough to serve the host of people who came to him. The party, it must be remembered, was *Mrs.* Brough's party, not the gentleman's,—he, being in the Dissenting way, would scarcely sanction any entertainments of the kind: but he told his City friends that his lady governed him in everything; and it was generally observed that most of them would allow their daughters to go to the ball if asked, on account of the immense number of the nobility which our director assembled together: Mrs. Roundhand, I know, for one, would have given one of her ears to go; but, as I have said before, nothing would induce Brough to ask her.

Roundhand himself, and Gutch, nineteenth clerk, son of the brother of an East Indian director, were the only two of our gents invited, as we knew very well: for they had received their invitations many weeks before, and bragged about them not a little. But two days

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before the ball, and after my diamond-pin had had its due effect upon the gents at the office, Abednego, who had been in the directors' room, came to my desk with a great smirk, and said, 'Tit, Mr. B. says that he expects you will come down with Roundhand to the ball on Thursday.' I thought Moses was joking,—at any rate, that Mr. B.'s message was a queer one; for people don't usually send invitations in that abrupt, peremptory sort of way; but, sure enough, he presently came down himself and confirmed it, saying, as he was going out of the office, 'Mr. Titmarsh, you will come down on Thursday to Mrs. Brough's party, where you will see some relations of yours.'

'West End again!' says that Gus Hoskins; and accordingly down I went, taking a place in a cab which Roundhand hired for himself, Gutch, and me, and for which he very generously paid eight shillings.

There is no use to describe the grand gala, nor the number of lamps in the lodge and in the garden, nor the crowd of carriages that came in at the gates, nor the troops of curious people outside; nor the ices, fiddlers, wreaths of flowers, and cold supper within. The whole description was beautifully given in a fashionable paper, by a reporter who observed the same from the 'Yellow Lion' over the way, and told it in his journal in the most accurate manner; getting an account of the dresses of the great people from their footmen and coachmen, when they came to the ale-house for their porter. As for the names of the guests, they, you may be sure, found their way to the same newspaper: and a great laugh was had at my expense, because among the titles of the great people mentioned my name appeared in the list of the 'Honourables.' Next day, Brough advertised 'a hundred and fifty guineas reward for an emerald necklace lost at the party of John Brough, Esq., at Fulham;' though some of our people said that no such thing was lost at all, and that Brough only wanted to

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advertise the magnificence of his society; but this doubt was raised by persons not invited, and envious no doubt.

Well, I wore my diamond, as you may imagine, and rigged myself in my best clothes, viz., my blue coat and brass buttons before mentioned, nankeen trousers and silk stockings, a white waistcoat, and a pair of white gloves bought for the occasion. But my coat was of country make, very high in the waist and short in the sleeves, and I suppose must have looked rather odd to some of the great people assembled, for they stared at me a great deal, and a whole crowd formed to see me dance—which I did to the best of my power, performing all the steps accurately and with great agility, as I had been taught by our dancing-master in the country.

And with whom do you think I had the honour to dance? With no less a person than Lady Jane Preston; who, it appears, had not gone out of town, and who shook me most kindly by the hand when she saw me, and asked me to dance with her. We had my Lord Tiptoff and Lady Fanny Rakes for our *vis-à-vis*.

You should have seen how the people crowded to look at us, and admired my dancing too, for I cut the very best of capers, quite different to the rest of the gents (my Lord among the number), who walked through the quadrille as if they thought it a trouble, and stared at my activity with all their might. But when I have a dance I like to enjoy myself: and Mary Smith often said I was the very best partner at our assemblies. While we were dancing, I told Lady Jane how Roundhand, Gutch, and I had come down three in a cab, besides the driver; and my account of our adventures made her Ladyship laugh, I warrant you. Lucky it was for me that I didn't go back in the same vehicle; for the driver went and intoxicated himself at the 'Yellow Lion,' threw out Gutch and our head-clerk as he was driving them back, and actually fought Gutch afterwards and blacked his eye, because he said that Gutch's red waistcoat frightened the horse.

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Lady Jane, however, spared me such an uncomfortable ride home: for she said she had a fourth place in her carriage, and asked me if I would accept it; and positively, at two o'clock in the morning, there was I, after setting the ladies and my Lord down, driven to Salisbury Square in a great thundering carriage, with flaming lamps and two tall footmen, who nearly knocked the door and the whole little street down with the noise they made at the rapper. You should have seen Gus's head peeping out of window in his white nightcap! He kept me up the whole night telling him about the ball, and the great people I had seen there; and next day he told at the office my stories, with his own usual embroideries upon them.

'Mr. Titmarsh,' said Lady Fanny, laughing to me, 'who is that great fat, curious man, the master of the house? Do you know he asked me if you were not related to us? and I said, "Oh, yes, you were."'

'Fanny!' says Lady Jane.

'Well,' answered the other, 'did not grandmamma say Mr. Titmarsh was her cousin?'

'But you know that grandmamma's memory is not very good.'

'Indeed, you're wrong, Lady Jane,' says my Lord; 'I think it's prodigious.'

'Yes, but not very—not very accurate.'

'No, my Lady,' says I; 'for her Ladyship, the Countess of Drum, said, if you remember, that my friend Gus Hoskins——'

'Whose cause you supported so bravely,' cries Lady Fanny.

'—That my friend Gus is her Ladyship's cousin too, which cannot be, for I know all his family: they live in Skinner Street and St. Mary Axe, and are not—not quite so *respectable* as *my* relatives.

At this they all began to laugh; and my Lord said, rather haughtily—

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'Depend upon it, Mr. Titmarsh, that Lady Drum is no more your cousin than she is the cousin of your friend Mr. Hoskinson.'

'Hoskins, my Lord—and so I told Gus; but you see he is very fond of me, and *will* have it that I am related to Lady D.: and say what I will to the contrary, tells the story everywhere. Though, to be sure,' added I with a laugh, 'it has gained me no small good in my time.' So I described to the party our dinner at Mrs. Roundhand's, which all came from my diamond-pin, and my reputation as a connection of the aristocracy. Then I thanked Lady Jane handsomely for her magnificent present of fruit and venison, and told her that it had entertained a great number of kind friends of mine, who had drunk her ladyship's health with the greatest gratitude.

'*A haunch of venison!*' cried Lady Jane, quite astonished; 'indeed, Mr. Titmarsh, I am quite at a loss to understand you.'

As we passed a gas-lamp, I saw Lady Fanny laughing as usual, and turning her great arch sparkling black eyes at Lord Tiptoff.

'Why, Lady Jane,' said he, 'if the truth must out, the great haunch of venison trick was one of this young lady's performing. You must know that I had received the above-named haunch from Lord Guttlebury's park: and knowing that Preston is not averse to Guttlebury venison, was telling Lady Drum (in whose carriage I had a seat that day, as Mr. Titmarsh was not in the way), that I intended the haunch for your husband's table. Whereupon my Lady Fanny, clapping together her little hands, declared and vowed that the venison should *not* go to Preston, but should be sent to a gentleman about whose adventures on the day previous we had just been talking—to Mr. Titmarsh, in fact: whom Preston, as Fanny vowed, had used most cruelly, and to whom, she said, a reparation was due. So my Lady

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Fanny insists upon our driving straight to my rooms in the Albany (you know I am only to stay in my bachelor's quarters a month longer)——'

'Nonsense!' says Lady Fanny.

'—Insists upon driving straight to my chambers in the Albany, extracting thence the above-named haunch——'

'Grandmamma was very sorry to part with it,' cries Lady Fanny.

'—And then she orders us to proceed to Mr. Titmarsh's house in the City, where the venison was left, in company with a couple of baskets of fruit bought at Grange's by Lady Fanny herself.'

'And what was more,' said Lady Fanny, 'I made grandmamma go into Fr——into Lord Tiptoff's rooms, and dictated out of my own mouth the letter which he wrote, and pinned up the haunch of venison that his hideous old housekeeper brought us—I am quite jealous of her—I pinned up the haunch of venison in a copy of the *John Bull* newspaper.'

It had one of the Ramsbottom letters in it, I remember, which Gus and I read on Sunday at breakfast, and we nearly killed ourselves with laughing. The ladies laughed too when I told them this; and good-natured Lady Jane said she would forgive her sister, and hoped I would too: which I promised to do as often as her Ladyship chose to repeat the offence.

I never had any more vension from the family; but I'll tell you *what* I had. About a month after came a card of 'Lord and Lady Tiptoff,' and a great piece of plum-cake; of which, I am sorry to say, Gus ate a great deal too much.

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CHAPTER VI

OF THE WEST DIDDLESEX ASSOCIATION, AND OF THE EFFECT THE DIAMOND HAD THERE

WELL, the magic of the pin was not over yet. Very soon after Mrs. Brough's grand party, our director called me up to his room at the West Diddlesex, and after examining my accounts, and speaking a while about business, said, 'That's a very fine diamond-pin, Master Titmarsh' (he spoke in a grave, patronising way), 'and I called you on purpose to speak to you upon the subject. I do not object to seeing the young men of this establishment well and handsomely dressed; but I know that their salaries cannot afford ornaments like those, and I grieve to see you with a thing of such value. You have paid for it, sir,—I trust you have paid for it; for, of all things, my dear—dear young friend, beware of debt.'

I could not conceive why Brough was reading me this lecture about debt and my having bought the diamond-pin, as I knew that he had been asking about it already, and how I came by it—Abednego told me so. 'Why, sir,' says I, 'Mr. Abednego told me that he had told you that I had told him——'

'Oh, ay—by-the-bye, now I recollect, Mr. Titmarsh—I *do* recollect—yes; though I suppose, sir, you will imagine that I have other more important things to remember.'

'Oh, sir, in course,' says I.

'That one of the clerks *did* say something about a pin—that one of the other gentlemen had it. And so your pin was given you, was it?'

'It was given me, sir, by my aunt, Mrs. Hoggarty of Castle Hoggarty,' said I, raising my voice; for I was a little proud of Castle Hoggarty.

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'She must be very rich to make such presents, Titmarsh?'

'Why, thank you, sir,' says I, 'she *is* pretty well off. Four hundred a year jointure; a farm at Slopperton, sir; three houses at Squashtail; and three thousand two hundred loose cash at the banker's, as I happen to know, sir,—*that's all.*'

I did happen to know this, you see; because, while I was down in Somersetshire, Mr. MacManus, my aunt's agent in Ireland, wrote to say that a mortgage she had on Lord Brallaghan's property had just been paid off, and that the money was lodged at Coutts's. Ireland was in a very disturbed state in those days; and my aunt wisely determined not to invest her money in that country any more, but to look out for some good security in England. However, as she had always received six per cent. in Ireland, she would not hear of a smaller interest; and had warned me, as I was a commercial man, on coming to town, to look out for some means by which she could invest her money at that rate at least.

'And how do you come to know Mrs. Hoggarty's property so accurately?' said Mr. Brough; upon which I told him.

'Good heavens, sir! and do you mean that you, a clerk in the West Diddlesex Insurance Office, applied to by a respectable lady as to the manner in which she should invest property, never spoke to her about the Company which you have the honour to serve? Do you mean, sir, that you, knowing there was a bonus of five per cent. for yourself upon shares taken, did not press Mrs. Hoggarty to join us?'

'Sir,' says I, 'I'm an honest man, and would not take a bonus from my own relation.'

'Honest I know you are, my boy—give me your hand! So am I honest—so is every man in this company honest; but we must be prudent as well. We have five millions of capital on our books, as you see—five

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bonâ fide millions of *bonâ fide* sovereigns paid up, sir,—there is no dishonesty there. But why should we not have twenty millions — a hundred millions? Why should not this be the greatest commercial Association in the world?—as it shall be, sir,—it shall, as sure as my name is John Brough, if Heaven bless my honest endeavours to establish it! But do you suppose that it can be so, unless every man among us use his utmost exertions to forward the success of the enterprise? Never, sir,—never; and, for me, I say so everywhere. I glory in what I do. There is not a house in which I enter, but I leave a prospectus of the West Diddlesex. There is not a single tradesman I employ, but has shares in it to some amount. My servants, sir,—my very servants and grooms, are bound up with it. And the first question I ask of any one who applies to me for a place is, Are you insured or a shareholder in the West Diddlesex?—the second, Have you a good character? And if the first question is answered in the negative, I say to the party coming to me, Then *be* a shareholder before you ask for a place in my household. Did you not see me —me, John Brough, whose name is good for millions—step out of my coach-and-four into this office, with four pounds nineteen, which I paid in to Mr Roundhand at the price of half-a-share for the porter at my lodge-gate? Did you remark that I deducted a shilling from the five pounds?'

'Yes, sir; it was the day you drew out eight hundred and seventy-three ten and six—Thursday week,' says I.

'And why did I deduct that shilling, sir? Because it was *my commission*—John Brough's commission; honestly earned by him, and openly taken. Was there any disguise about it? No. Did I do it for the love of a shilling? No,' says Brough, laying his hand on his heart, 'I did it from *principle*,—from that motive which guides every one of my actions, as I can look up to Heaven and say. I wish all my young men to see my example, and

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follow it: I wish—I pray that they may. Think of that example, sir. That porter of mine has a sick wife and nine young children: he is himself a sick man, and his tenure of life is feeble; he has earned money, sir, in my service—sixty pounds and more—it is all his children have to look to—all: but for that, in the event of his death, they would be houseless beggars in the street. And what have I done for that family, sir? I have put that money out of the reach of Robert Gates, and placed it so that it shall be a blessing to his family at his death. Every farthing is invested in shares in this office; and Robert Gates, my lodge-porter, is a holder of three shares in the West Diddlesex Association, and, in that capacity, your master and mine. Do you think I want to *cheat* Gates?'

'Oh, sir!' says I.

'To cheat that poor helpless man, and those tender innocent children!—you can't think so, sir; I should be a disgrace to human nature if I did. But what boots all my energy and perseverance? What though I place my friend's money, my family's money, my own money—my hopes, wishes, desires, ambitions—all upon this enterprise? You young men will not do so. You, whom I treat with love and confidence as my children, make no return to *me*. When I toil, you remain still; when I struggle, you look on. Say the word at once,—you *doubt* me! O heavens, that *this* should be the reward of all my care and love for you!'

Here Mr. Brough was so affected that he actually burst into tears, and I confess I saw in its true light the negligence of which I had been guilty.

'Sir,' says I, 'I am very—very sorry: it was a matter of delicacy, rather than otherwise, which induced me not to speak to my aunt about the West Diddlesex.'

'Delicacy, my dear dear boy—as if there can be any delicacy about making your aunt's fortune! Say indifference to me, say ingratitude, say folly,—but don't

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say delicacy—no, no, not delicacy. Be honest, my boy, and call things by their right names—always do.'

'It *was* folly and ingratitude, Mr. Brough,' says I: 'I see it all now; and I'll write to my aunt this very post.'

'You had better do no such thing,' says Brough bitterly: 'the stocks are at ninety, and Mrs. Hoggarty can get three per cent. for her money.'

'I *will* write, sir,—upon my word and honour, I will write.'

'Well, as your honour is passed, you must, I suppose; for never break your word—no, not in a trifle, Titmarsh. Send me up the letter when you have done, and I'll frank it—upon my word and honour I will,' says Mr. Brough, laughing, and holding out his hand to me.

I took it, and he pressed mine very kindly—'You may as well sit down here,' says he, as he kept hold of it; 'there is plenty of paper.'

And so I sat down and mended a beautiful pen, and began and wrote, 'Independent West Diddlesex Association, June 1822,' and 'My dear Aunt,' in the best manner possible. Then I paused a little, thinking what I should next say; for I have always found that difficulty about letters. The date and My dear So-and-so one writes off immediately—it is the next part which is hard; and I put my pen in my mouth, flung myself back in my chair, and began to think about it.

'Bah!' said Brough, 'are you going to be about this letter all day, my good fellow? Listen to me, and I'll dictate to you in a moment.' So he began:—

'My dear Aunt,—Since my return from Somersetshire, I am very happy indeed to tell you that I have so pleased the managing director of our Association and the Board, that they have been good enough to appoint me third clerk——'

'Sir!' says I.

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'Write what I say. Mr. Roundhand, as has been agreed by the Board yesterday, quits the clerk's desk and takes the title of secretary and actuary. Mr. Highmore takes his place; Mr. Abednego follows him, and I place you as third clerk—as

'third clerk (write), with a salary of a hundred and fifty pounds per annum. This news will, I know, gratify my dear mother and you, who have been a second mother to me all my life.

'When I was last at home, I remember you consulted me as to the best mode of laying out a sum of money which was lying useless in your banker's hands. I have since lost no opportunity of gaining what information I could: and situated here as I am, in the very midst of affairs, I believe, although very young, I am as good a person to apply to as many others of greater age and standing.

'I frequently thought of mentioning to you our Association, but feelings of delicacy prevented me from doing so. I did not wish that any one should suppose that a shadow of self-interest could move me in any way.

'But I believe, without any sort of doubt, that the West Diddlesex Association offers the best security that you can expect for your capital, and, at the same time, the highest interest you can anywhere procure.

'The situation of the Company, as I have it from *the very best authority* (underline that), is as follows:—

'The subscribed and *bonâ fide* capital is FIVE MILLIONS STERLING.

'The body of directors you know. Suffice it to say that the managing director is John Brough, Esq., of the firm of Brough & Hoff, a Member of Parliament, and a man as well-known as Mr. Rothschild in the City of London. His private fortune, I know for a fact, amounts to half-a-million; and the last dividends paid to the shareholders of the I. W. D. Association amounted to $6\frac{1}{8}$ per cent. per annum.'

[That I know was the dividend declared by us.]

'Although the shares in the market are at a very great

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premium, it is the privilege of the four first clerks to dispose of a certain number, £5000 each at par; and if you, my dearest aunt, would wish for £2500 worth, I hope you will allow me to oblige you by offering you so much of my new privileges.

'Let me hear from you immediately upon the subject, as I have already an offer for the whole amount of my shares at market price.'

'But I haven't, sir,' says I.

'You have, sir. *I* will take the shares; but I want *you*. I want as many respectable persons in the Company as I can bring. I want you because I like you, and I don't mind telling you that I have views of my own as well; for I am an honest man, and say openly what I mean, and I'll tell you *why* I want you. I can't, by the regulations of the Company, have more than a certain number of votes; but if your aunt takes shares, I expect —I don't mind owning it—that she will vote with me. *Now* do you understand me? My object is to be all in all with the Company; and if I be, I will make it the most glorious enterprise that ever was conducted in the City of London.'

So I signed the letter and left it with Mr. B. to frank.

The next day I went and took my place at the third clerk's desk, being led to it by Mr. B., who made a speech to the gents, much to the annoyance of the other chaps, who grumbled about their services: though, as for the matter of that, our services were very much alike: the Company was only three years old, and the oldest clerk in it had not six months' more standing in it than I. 'Look out,' said that envious M'Whirter to me. 'Have you got money, or have any of your relations money? or are any of them going to put it into the concern?'

I did not think fit to answer him, but took a pinch out of his mull, and was always kind to him; and he, to say the truth, was always most civil to me. As for Gus

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Hoskins, he began to think I was a superior being; and I must say that the rest of the chaps behaved very kindly in the matter, and said that if one man were to be put over their heads before another, they would have pitched upon me, for I had never harmed any of them, and done little kindnesses to several.

'I know,' says Abednego, 'how you got the place. It was I who got it you. I told Brough you were a cousin to Preston's, the Lord of the Treasury, had venison from him and all that; and depend upon it he expects that you will be able to do him some good in that quarter.

I think there was some likelihood in what Abednego said, because our governor, as we called him, frequently spoke to me about my cousin; told me to push the concern in the West End of the town, get as many noblemen as we could to insure with us, and so on. It was in vain I said I could do nothing with Mr. Preston. 'Bah! bah!' says Mr. Brough, 'don't tell *me*. People don't send haunches of venison to you for nothing;' and I'm convinced he thought I was a very cautious, prudent fellow, for not bragging about my great family, and keeping my connection with them a secret. To be sure, he might have learned the truth from Gus, who lived with me; but Gus would insist that I was hand in glove with all the nobility, and boasted about me ten times as much as I did myself.

The chaps used to call me the 'West Ender.'

'See,' thought I, 'what I have gained by Aunt Hoggarty giving me a diamond-pin! What a lucky thing it is that she did not give me the money, as I hoped she would! Had I not had the pin—had I even taken it to any other person but Mr. Polonius, Lady Drum would never have noticed me; had Lady Drum never noticed me, Mr. Brough never would, and I never should have been third clerk of the West Diddlesex.'

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I took heart at all this, and wrote off on the very evening of my appointment to my dearest Mary Smith, giving her warning that a 'certain event,' for which one of us was longing very earnestly, might come off sooner that we had expected. And why not? Miss S.'s own fortune was £70 a year, mine was £150; and when we had £300, we always vowed we would marry. 'Ah!' thought I, 'if I could but go to Somersetshire now, I might boldly walk up to old Smith's door' (he was her grandfather, and a half-pay lieutenant of the navy), 'I might knock at the knocker, and see my beloved Mary in the parlour, and not be obliged to sneak behind hay-ricks on the look-out for her, or pelt stones at midnight at her window.'

My aunt, in a few days, wrote a pretty gracious reply to my letter. She had not determined, she said, as to the manner in which she should employ her three thousand pounds, but should take my offer into consideration; begging me to keep my shares open for a little while, until her mind was made up.

What, then, does Mr. Brough do? I learned afterwards, in the year 1830, when he and the West Diddlesex Association had disappeared altogether, how he had proceeded.

'Who are the attorneys at Slopperton?' says he to me in a careless way.

'Mr. Ruck, sir,' says I, 'is the Tory solicitor, and Messrs. Hodge & Smithers the Liberals.' I knew them very well, for the fact is, before Mary Smith came to live in our parts, I was rather partial to Miss Hodge, and her great gold-coloured ringlets; but Mary came, and soon put *her* nose out of joint, as the saying is.

'And you are of what politics?'

'Why, sir, we are Liberals.' I was rather ashamed of this, for Mr. Brough was an out-and-out Tory; but Hodge & Smithers is a most respectable firm. I brought up a packet from them to Hickson, Dixon, Paxton &

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Jackson, *our* solicitors, who are their London correspondents.

Mr. Brough only said, 'Oh, indeed!' and did not talk any further on the subject, but began admiring my diamond-pin very much.

'Titmarsh, my dear boy,' says he, 'I have a young lady at Fulham who is worth seeing, I assure you, and who has heard so much about you from her father (for I like you, my boy, I don't care to own it), that she is rather anxious to see you too. Suppose you come down to us for a week? Abednego will do your work.'

'Law, sir! you are very kind,' says I.

'Well, you shall come down; and I hope you will like my claret. But hark ye! I don't think, my dear fellow, you are quite smart enough—quite well enough dressed. Do you understand me?'

'I've my blue coat and brass buttons at home, sir.'

'What! that thing with the waist between your shoulders that you wore at Mrs. Brough's party?' (It *was* rather high-waisted, being made in the country two years before.) 'No—no, that will never do. Get some new clothes, sir,—two new suits of clothes.'

'Sir!' says I, 'I'm already, if the truth must be told, very short of money for this quarter, and can't afford myself a new suit for a long time to come.'

'Pooh, pooh! don't let that annoy you. Here's a ten-pound note—but no, on second thoughts, you may as well go to my tailor's. I'll drive you down there: and never mind the bill, my good lad!' And drive me down he actually did, in his grand coach-and-four, to Mr. Von Stiltz, in Clifford Street, who took my measure, and sent me home two of the finest coats ever seen, a dress-coat and a frock, a velvet waistcoat, a silk ditto, and three pairs of pantaloons of the most beautiful make. Brough told me to get some boots and pumps, and silk stockings for evenings; so that when the time came for me to go down to Fulham, I appeared as handsome as

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any young nobleman, and Gus said that 'I looked, by Jingo, like a regular tip-top swell.'

In the meantime the following letter had been sent down to Hodge & Smithers:—

'Ram Alley, Cornhill, London: *July* 1822.

'Dear Sirs,

. . . . . .

[This part being on private affairs
relative to the cases of
Dixon *v.* Haggerstony,
Snodgrass *v.* Rubbidge and another
I am not permitted
to extract.]

. . . . . .

'Likewise we beg to hand you a few more prospectuses of the Independent West Diddlesex Fire and Life Insurance Company, of which we have the honour to be the solicitors in London. We wrote to you last year, requesting you to accept the Slopperton and Somerset agency for the same, and have been expecting for some time back that either shares or assurances should be effected by you.

'The capital of the Company, as you know, is five millions sterling (say £5,000,000), and we are in a situation to offer more than the usual commission to our agents of the legal profession. We shall be happy to give a premium of 6 per cent. for shares to the amount of £1000, 6½ per cent. above a thousand, to be paid immediately upon the taking of the shares.

'I am, dear Sirs, for self and partners,
'Yours most faithfully,
'Samuel Jackson.'

This letter, as I have said, came into my hands some time afterwards. I knew nothing of it in the year 1822, when, in my new suit of clothes, I went down to pass a week at the Rookery, Fulham, residence of John Brough, Esquire, M.P.

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CHAPTER VII

HOW SAMUEL TITMARSH REACHED THE HIGHEST POINT OF PROSPERITY

If I had the pen of a George Robins, I might describe the Rookery properly: suffice it, however, to say, it is a very handsome country place; with handsome lawns sloping down to the river, handsome shrubberies and conservatories, fine stables, out-houses, kitchen-gardens, and everything belonging to a first-rate *rus in urbe*, as the great auctioneer called it when he hammered it down some years after.

I arrived on a Saturday at half-an-hour before dinner: a grave gentleman out of livery showed me to my room; a man in a chocolate coat and gold lace, with Brough's crest on the buttons, brought me a silver shaving-pot of hot water on a silver tray; and a grand dinner was ready at six, at which I had the honour of appearing in Von Stiltz's dress-coat and my new silk stockings and pumps.

Brough took me by the hand as I came in, and presented me to his lady, a stout fair-haired woman, in light blue satin; then to his daughter, a tall, thin, dark-eyed girl, with beetle-brows, looking very ill-natured, and about eighteen.

'Belinda, my love,' said her papa, 'this young gentleman is one of my clerks, who was at our ball.'

'Oh, indeed!' says Belinda, tossing up her head.

'But not a common clerk, Miss Belinda,—so, if you please, we will have none of your aristocratic airs with him. He is a nephew of the Countess of Drum; and I hope he will soon be very high in our establishment, and in the City of London.'

At the name of Countess (I had a dozen times rectified

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the error about our relationship) Miss Belinda made a low curtsey, and stared at me very hard, and said she would try and make the Rookery pleasant to any friend of papa's. 'We have not much *monde* to-day,' continued Miss Brough, 'and are only in *petit comité*; but I hope before you leave us you will see some *société* that will make your *séjour* agreeable.'

I saw at once that she was a fashionable girl, from her using the French language in this way.

'Isn't she a fine girl?' said Brough, whispering to me, and evidently as proud of her as a man could be. 'Isn't she a fine girl—eh, you dog? Do you see breeding like that in Somersetshire.'

'No, sir, upon my word!' answered I, rather slily; for I was thinking all the while how 'Somebody' was a thousand times more beautiful, simple, and ladylike.

'And what has my dearest love been doing all day?' said her papa.

'Oh, pa! I have *pincéd* the harp a little to Captain Fizgig's flute. Didn't I, Captain Fizgig?'

Captain the Honourable Francis Fizgig said, 'Yes, Brough, your fair daughter *pincéd* the harp, and *touchéd* the piano, and *égratignéd* the guitar, and *écorchéd* a song or two; and we had the pleasure of a *promenade à l'eau* —of a walk upon the water.'

'Law, Captain!' cries Mrs. Brough, 'walk on the water?'

'Hush, mamma, you don't understand French?' says Miss Belinda, with a sneer.

'It's a sad disadvantage, madam,' says Fizgig gravely; 'and I recommend you and Brough here, who are coming out in the great world, to have some lessons; or at least get up a couple of dozen phrases, and introduce them into your conversation here and there. I suppose, sir, you speak it commonly at the office, Mr. What-you-call-it?' And Mr. Fizgig put his glass into his eye and looked at me.

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'We speak English, sir,' says I, 'knowing it better than French.'

'Everybody has not had your opportunities, Miss Brough,' continued the gentleman. 'Everybody has not *voyagé* like *nous autres*, hey? *Mais que voulez-vous*, my good sir? you must stick to your cursed ledgers and things. What's the French for ledger, Miss Belinda?'

'How can you ask? *Je n'en sçais rien*, I'm sure.'

'You should learn, Miss Brough,' said her father. 'The daughter of a British merchant need not be ashamed of the means by which her father gets his bread. *I'm* not ashamed—I'm not proud. Those who know John Brough, know that ten years ago he was a poor clerk like my friend Titmarsh here, and is now worth half-a-million. Is there any man in the House better listened to than John Brough? Is there any duke in the land that can give a better dinner than John Brough; or a larger fortune to his daughter than John Brough? Why, sir, the humble person now speaking to you could buy out many a German duke! But I'm not proud—no, no, not proud. There's my daughter—look at her—when I die, she will be mistress of my fortune; but am I proud? No! Let him who can win her, marry her, that's what I say. Be it you, Mr. Fizgig, son of a peer of the realm; or you, Bill Tidd. Be it a duke or a shoeblack, what do I care, hey?—what do I care?'

'O-o-oh!' sighed the gent who went by the name of Bill Tidd: a very pale young man, with a black riband round his neck instead of a handkerchief, and his collars turned down like Lord Byron. He was leaning against the mantelpiece, and with a pair of great green eyes ogling Miss Brough with all his might.

'O John—my dear John!' cried Mrs. Brough, seizing her husband's hand and kissing it, 'you are an angel, that you are!'

'Isabella, don't flatter me; I'm a *man*,—a plain down-

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right citizen of London, without a particle of pride, except in you and my daughter here—my two Bells, as I call them! This is the way that we live, Titmarsh, my boy: ours is a happy, humble, Christian home, and that's all. Isabella, leave go my hand!'

'Mamma, you musn't do so before company; it's odious!' shrieked Miss B.; and mamma quietly let the hand fall, and heaved from her ample bosom a great large sigh. I felt a liking for that simple woman, and a respect for Brough too. He *couldn't* be a bad man whose wife loved him so.

Dinner was soon announced, and I had the honour of leading in Miss B., who looked back rather angrily, I thought, at Captain Fizgig, because that gentleman had offered his arm to Mrs. Brough. He sat on the right of Mrs. Brough, and Miss flounced down on the seat next to him, leaving me and Mr. Tidd to take our places at the opposite side of the table.

At dinner there was turbot and soup first, and boiled turkey afterwards, of course. How is it that at all the great dinners they have this perpetual boiled turkey? It was real turtle-soup; the first time I had ever tasted it; and I remarked how Mrs. B., who insisted on helping it, gave all the green lumps of fat to her husband, and put several slices of the breast of the bird under the body, until it came to his turn to be helped.

'I'm a plain man,' says John, 'and eat a plain dinner. I hate your kickshaws, though I keep a French cook for those who are not of my way of thinking. I'm no egotist, look you; I've no prejudices; and Miss there has her *béchamels* and fallals according to her taste. Captain, try the *volly-vong*.'

We had plenty of champagne and old Madeira with dinner, and great silver tankards of porter, which those might take who chose. Brough made especially a boast of drinking beer; and when the ladies retired, said, 'Gentlemen, Tiggins will give you an unlimited supply

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of wine: there's no stinting here;' and then laid himself down in his easy-chair and fell asleep.

'He always does so,' whispered Mr. Tidd to me.

'Get some of that yellow-sealed wine, Tiggins,' says the Captain. 'That other claret we had yesterday is loaded, and disagrees with me infernally.?'

I must say I liked the yellow seal much better than Aunt Hoggarty's Rosolio.

I soon found out what Mr. Tidd was, and what he was longing for.

'Isn't she a glorious creature?' says he to me.

'Who, sir?' says I.

'Miss Belinda, to be sure!' cried Tidd. 'Did mortal ever look upon eyes like hers, or view a more sylph-like figure?'

'She might have a little more flesh, Mr. Tidd,' says the Captain, 'and a little less eyebrow. They look vicious, those scowling eyebrows, in a girl. *Qu'en dites-vous*, Mr. Titmarsh, as Miss Brough would say?'

'I think it remarkably good claret, sir,' says I.

'Egad, you're the right sort of fellow!' says the Captain. '*Volto sciolto*, eh? You respect our sleeping host yonder?'

'That I do, sir, as the first man in the City of London, and my managing Director.'

'And so do I,' says Tidd; 'and this day fortnight, when I'm of age, I'll prove my confidence too.'

'As how?' says I.

'Why, sir, you must know that I come into—ahem—a considerable property, sir, on the 14th of July, which my father made—in business.'

'Say at once he was a tailor, Tidd.'

'He *was* a tailor, sir,—but what of that? I've had a University education, and have the feelings of a gentleman; as much—ay, perhaps, and more, than some members of an effete aristocracy.'

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'Tidd, don't be severe!' says the Captain, drinking a tenth glass.

'Well, Mr. Titmarsh, when of age I come into a considerable property; and Mr. Brough has been so good as to say he can get me twelve hundred a year for my twenty thousand pounds, and I have promised to invest them.'

'In the West Diddlesex, sir?' says I — 'in our office?'

'No, in another company, of which Mr. Brough is director, and quite as good a thing. Mr. Brough is a very old friend of my family, sir, and he has taken a great liking to me; and he says that with my talents I ought to get into Parliament; and then—and then! after I have laid out my patrimony, I may look to *matrimony*, you see!'

'Oh, you designing dog!' said the Captain. 'When I used to lick you at school, who ever would have thought that I was thrashing a sucking statesman?'

'Talk away, boys!' said Brough, waking out of his sleep; 'I only sleep with half an eye, and hear you all. Yes, you shall get into Parliament, Tidd, my man, or my name's not Brough! You shall have six per cent. for your money, or never believe me! But as for my daughter—ask *her*, and not me. You, or the Captain, or Titmarsh, may have her, if you can get her. All I ask in a son-in-law is, that he should be, as every one of you is, an honourable and high-minded man!'

Tidd at this looked very knowing; and as our host sank off to sleep again, pointed archly at his eyebrows, and wagged his head at the Captain.

'Bah!' says the Captain. 'I say what I think; and you may tell Miss Brough if you like.' And so presently this conversation ended, and we were summoned in to coffee. After which the Captain sang songs with Miss Brough; Tidd looked at her and said nothing; I looked at prints, and Mrs. Brough sat knitting stockings for

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the poor. The Captain was sneering openly at Miss Brough and her affected ways and talk; but in spite of his bullying, contemptuous way, I thought she seemed to have a great regard for him, and to bear his scorn very meekly.

At twelve Captain Fizgig went off to his barracks at Knightsbridge, and Tidd and I to our rooms. Next day being Sunday, a great bell woke us at eight, and at nine we all assembled in the breakfast-room, where Mr. Brough read prayers, a chapter, and made an exhortation afterwards, to us and all the members of the household; except the French cook, Monsieur Nontongpaw, whom I could see, from my chair, walking about in the shrubberies in his white nightcap, smoking a cigar.

Every morning on week-days, punctually at eight, Mr. Brough went through the same ceremony, and had his family to prayers; but though this man was a hypocrite, as I found afterwards, I'm not going to laugh at the family prayers, or say he was a hypocrite *because* he had them. There are many bad and good men who don't go through the ceremony at all; but I am sure the good men would be the better for it, and am not called upon to settle the question with respect to the bad ones; and therefore I have passed over a great deal of the religious part of Mr. Brough's behaviour; suffice it, that religion was always on his lips; that he went to Church thrice every Sunday, when he had not a party; and if he did not talk religion with us when we were alone, had a great deal to say upon the subject upon occasions, as I found one day when we had a Quaker and Dissenter party to dine, and when his talk was as grave as that of any minister present. Tidd was not there that day,—for nothing could make him forsake his Byron riband or refrain from wearing his collars turned down; so Tidd was sent with the buggy to Astley's. 'And hark ye, Titmarsh, my boy,' said he, 'leave your diamond-pin upstairs: our friends to-day don't like such gewgaws;

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and though for my part I am no enemy to harmless ornaments, yet I would not shock the feelings of those who have sterner opinions. You will see that my wife and Miss Brough consult my wishes in this respect. And so they did,—for they both came down to dinner in black gowns and tippets; whereas Miss B. had commonly her dress half off her shoulders.

The Captain rode over several times to see us; and Miss Brough seemed always delighted to see *him*. One day I met him as I was walking out alone by the river, and we had a long talk together.

'Mr. Titmarsh,' says he, 'from what little I have seen of you, you seem to be an honest, straight-minded young fellow; and I want some information that you can give. Tell me, in the first place, if you will—and upon my honour it shall go no farther—about this Insurance Company of yours? You are in the City, and see how affairs are going on. Is your concern a stable one?'

'Sir,' said I, 'frankly then, and upon my honour too, I believe it is. It has been set up only four years, it is true; but Mr. Brough had a great name when it was established, and a vast connection. Every clerk in the office has, to be sure, in a manner, paid for his place, either by taking shares himself, or by his relations taking them. I got mine because my mother, who is very poor, devoted a small sum of money that came to us to the purchase of an annuity for herself and a provision for me. The matter was debated by the family and our attorneys, Messrs. Hodge & Smithers, who are very well known in our part of the country; and it was agreed on all hands that my mother could not do better with her money for all of us than invest it in this way. Brough alone is worth half-a-million of money, and his name is a host in itself. Nay, more: I wrote the other day to an aunt of mine, who has a considerable sum of money in loose cash, and who had consulted me as to the disposal

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of it, to invest it in our office. Can I give you any better proof of my opinion of its solvency?'

'Did Brough persuade you in any way?'

'Yes, he certainly spoke to me: but he very honestly told me his motives, and tells them to us all as honestly. He says, "Gentlemen, it is my object to increase the connection of the office as much as possible. I want to crush all the other offices in London. Our terms are lower than any office, and we can bear to have them lower, and a great business will come to us that way. But we must work ourselves as well. Every single shareholder and officer of the establishment must exert himself, and bring us customers,—no matter for how little they are engaged—engage them: that is the great point." And accordingly our Director makes all his friends and servants shareholders: his very lodge-porter yonder is a shareholder; and he thus endeavours to fasten upon all whom he comes near. I, for instance, have just been appointed over the heads of our gents, to a much better place than I held. I am asked down here, and entertained royally: and why? Because my aunt has three thousand pounds which Mr. Brough wants her to invest with us.'

'That looks awkward, Mr. Titmarsh.'

'Not a whit, sir: he makes no disguise of the matter. When the question is settled one way or the other, I don't believe Mr. Brough will take any further notice of me. But he wants me now. This place happened to fall in just at the very moment when he had need of me; and he hopes to gain over my family through me. He told me as much as we drove down. "You are a man of the world, Titmarsh," said he; "you know that I don't give you this place because you are an honest fellow, and write a good hand. If I had a lesser bribe to offer you at the moment, I should only have given you that; but I had no choice, and gave you what was in my power."'

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'That's fair enough; but what can make Brough so eager for such a small sum as three thousand pounds?'

'If it had been ten, sir, he would have been not a bit more eager. You don't know the City of London, and the passion which our great men in the share-market have for increasing their connection. Mr. Brough, sir, would canvass and wheedle a chimney-sweep in the way of business. See, here is poor Tidd and his twenty thousand pounds. Our Director has taken possession of him just in the same way. He wants all the capital he can lay his hands on.'

'Yes, and suppose he runs off with the capital?'

'Mr. Brough, of the firm of Brough & Hoff, sir? Suppose the Bank of England runs off! But here we are at the lodge-gate. Let's ask Gates, another of Mr. Brough's victims.' And we went in and spoke to old Gates.

'Well, Mr. Gates,' says I, beginning the matter cleverly, 'you are one of my masters, you know, at the West Diddlesex yonder?'

'Yees, sure,' says old Gates, grinning. He was a retired servant, with a large family come to him in his old age.

'May I ask you what your wages are, Mr. Gates, that you can lay by so much money, and purchase shares in our Company?'

Gates told us his wages; and when we inquired whether they were paid regularly, swore that his master was the kindest gentleman in the world: that he had put two of his daughters into service, two of his sons to charity schools, made one apprentice, and narrated a hundred other benefits that he had received from the family. Mrs. Brough clothed half the children; master gave them blankets and coats in winter, and soup and meat all the year round. There never was such a generous family, sure, since the world began.

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'Well, sir,' said I to the Captain, 'does that satisfy you? Mr. Brough gives to these people fifty times as much as he gains from them; and yet he makes Mr. Gates take shares in our Company.'

'Mr. Titmarsh,' says the Captain, 'you are an honest fellow; and I confess your argument sounds well. Now tell me, do you know anything about Miss Brough and her fortune?'

'Brough will leave her everything—or says so.' But I suppose the Captain saw some particular expression in my countenance, for he laughed and said—

'I suppose, my dear fellow, you think she's dear at the price. Well, I don't know that you are far wrong.'

'Why, then, if I may make so bold, Captain Fizgig, are you always at her heels?'

'Mr. Titmarsh,' says the Captain, 'I owe twenty thousand pounds;' and he went back to the house directly, and proposed for her.

I thought this rather cruel and unprincipled conduct on the gentleman's part; for he had been introduced to the family by Mr. Tidd, with whom he had been at school, and had supplanted Tidd entirely in the great heiress's affections. Brough stormed and actually swore at his daughter (as the Captain told me afterwards) when he heard that the latter had accepted Mr. Fizgig; and at last, seeing the Captain, made him give his word that the engagement should be kept secret for a few months. And Captain F. only made a confidant of me, and the Mess, as he said: but this was after Tidd had paid his twenty thousand pounds over to our governor, which he did punctually when he came of age. The same day, too, he proposed for the young lady, and I need not say was rejected. Presently the Captain's engagement began to be whispered about: all his great relations, the Duke of Doncaster, the Earl of Cinqbars, the Earl of Crabs, &c., came and visited the Brough family; the Hon. Henry Ringwood became a share-

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holder in our Company, and the Earl of Crabs offered to be. Our shares rose to a premium; our Director, his lady, and daughter were presented at Court; and the great West Diddlesex Association bid fair to be the first Assurance Office in the kingdom.

A very short time after my visit to Fulham, my dear aunt wrote to me to say that she had consulted with her attorneys, Messrs. Hodge & Smithers, who strongly recommended that she should invest the sum as I advised. She had the sum invested, too, in my name, paying me many compliments upon my honesty and talent; of which, she said, Mr. Brough had given her the most flattering account. And at the same time my aunt informed me that at her death the shares should be my own. This gave me a great weight in the Company, as you may imagine. At our next annual meeting, I attended in my capacity as a shareholder, and had great pleasure in hearing Mr. Brough, in a magnificent speech, declare a dividend of six per cent., that we all received over the counter.

'You lucky young scoundrel!' said Brough to me; 'do you know what made me give you your place?'

'Why, my aunt's money, to be sure, sir,' said I.

'No such thing. Do you fancy I cared for those paltry three thousand pounds? I was told you were nephew of Lady Drum; and Lady Drum is grandmother of Lady Jane Preston; and Mr. Preston is a man who can do us a world of good. I knew that they had sent you venison, and the deuce knows what; and when I saw Lady Jane at my party shake you by the hand, and speak to you so kindly, I took all Abednego's tales for gospel. *That* was the reason you got the place, mark you, and not on account of your miserable three thousand pounds. Well, sir, a fortnight after you were with us at Fulham, I met Preston in the House, and made a merit of having given the place to his cousin. "Confound the insolent scoundrel!" said he; "*he* my

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cousin! I suppose you take all old Drum's stories for true? Why, man, it's her mania: she never is introduced to a man but she finds out a cousinship, and would not fail, of course, with that cur of a Titmarsh!" "Well," said I, laughing, "that cur has got a good place in consequence, and the matter can't be mended." So you see,' continued our Director, 'that you were indebted for your place, not to your aunt's money but——'

'But to MY AUNT'S DIAMOND-PIN!'

'Lucky rascal!' said Brough, poking me in the side and going out of the way. And lucky, in faith, I thought I was.

CHAPTER VIII

RELATES THE HAPPIEST DAY OF SAMUEL TITMARSH'S LIFE

I DON'T know how it was that in the course of the next six months, Mr. Roundhand, the actuary, who had been such a profound admirer of Mr. Brough and the West Diddlesex Association, suddenly quarrelled with both, and taking his money out of the concern, he disposed of his £5000 worth of shares to a pretty good profit, and went away, speaking everything that was evil both of the Company and the Director.

Mr. Highmore now became secretary and actuary, Mr. Abednego was first clerk, and your humble servant was second in the office at a salary of £250 a year. How unfounded were Mr. Roundhand's aspersions of the West Diddlesex appeared quite clearly at our meeting in January 1823, when our Chief Director, in one of the most brilliant speeches ever heard, declared that the half-yearly dividend was £4 per cent., at the rate of £8 per

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cent. per annum; and I sent to my aunt £120 sterling as the amount of the interest of the stock in my name.

My excellent aunt, Mrs. Hoggarty, delighted beyond measure, sent me back £10 for my own pocket, and asked me if she had not better sell Slopperton and Squashtail, and invest all her money in this admirable concern.

On this point I could not surely do better than ask the opinion of Mr. Brough. Mr. B. told me that shares could not be had but at a premium; but on my representing that I knew of £5000 worth in the market at par, he said—'Well, if so, he would like a fair price for his, and would not mind disposing of £5000 worth, as he had rather a glut of West Diddlesex shares, and his other concerns wanted feeding with ready money.' At the end of our conversation, of which I promised to report the purport to Mrs. Hoggarty, the Director was so kind as to say that he had determined on creating a place of private secretary to the Managing Director, and that I should hold that office with an additional salary of £150.

I had £250 a year, Miss Smith had £70 per annum to her fortune. What had I said should be my line of conduct whenever I could realise £300 a year?

Gus of course, and all the gents in our office through him, knew of my engagement with Mary Smith. Her father had been a commander in the navy, and a very distinguished officer; and though Mary, as I have said, only brought me a fortune of £70 a year, and I, as everybody said, in my present position in the office and the City of London, might have reasonably looked out for a lady with much more money, yet my friends agreed that the connection was very respectable, and I was content: as who would not have been with such a darling as Mary? I am sure, for my part, I would not have taken the Lord Mayor's own daughter in place of Mary, even with a plum to her fortune.

Mr. Brough of course was made aware of my ap-

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proaching marriage, as of everything else relating to every clerk in the office; and I do believe Abednego told him what we had for dinner every day. Indeed, his knowledge of our affairs was wonderful.

He asked me how Mary's money was invested. It was in the three per cent. Consols—£2333, 6s. 8d.

'Remember,' says he, 'my lad, Mrs. Sam Titmarsh that is to be may have seven per cent. for her money at the very least, and on better security than the Bank of England; for is not a Company of which John Brough is the head better than any other company in England?' and to be sure I thought he was not far wrong, and promised to speak to Mary's guardians on the subject before our marriage. Lieutenant Smith, her grandfather, had been at the first very much averse to our union. (I must confess that, one day finding me alone with her, and kissing, I believe, the tips of her little fingers, he had taken me by the collar and turned me out of doors.) But Sam Titmarsh, with a salary of £250 a year, a promised fortune of £150 more, and the right-hand man of Mr. John Brough of London, was a very different man from Sam the poor clerk, and the poor clergyman's widow's son; and the old gentleman wrote me a kind letter enough, and begged me to get him six pairs of lamb's-wool stockings and four ditto waistcoats from Romanis', and accepted them too as a present from me when I went down in June—in happy June of 1823—to fetch my dear Mary away.

Mr. Brough was likewise kindly anxious about my aunt's Slopperton and Squashtail property, which she had not as yet sold, as she talked of doing; and, as Mr. B. represented, it was a sin and a shame that any person in whom he took such interest, as he did in all the relatives of his dear young friend, should only have three per cent. for her money, when she could have eight elsewhere. He always called me Sam now, praised me to the other young men (who brought the praises regularly to me),

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said there was a cover always laid for me at Fulham, and repeatedly took me thither. There was but little company when I went; and M'Whirter used to say he only asked me on days when he had his vulgar acquaintances. But I did not care for the great people, not being born in their sphere; and indeed did not much care for going to the house at all. Miss Belinda was not at all to my liking. After her engagement with Captain Fizgig, and after Mr. Tidd had paid his £20,000 and Fizgig's great relations had joined in some of our Director's Companies, Mr. Brough declared he believed that Captain Fizgig's views were mercenary, and put him to the proof at once, by saying that he must take Miss Brough without a farthing, or not have her at all. Whereupon Captain Fizgig got an appointment in the colonies, and Miss Brough became more ill-humoured than ever. But I could not help thinking she was rid of a bad bargain, and pitying poor Tidd, who came back to the charge again more love-sick than ever, and was rebuffed pitilessly by Miss Belinda. Her father plainly told Tidd, too, that his visits were disagreeable to Belinda, and though he must always love and value him, he begged him to discontinue his calls at the Rookery.

Poor fellow! he had paid his £20,000 away for nothing! for what was six per cent. to him compared to six per cent. and the hand of Miss Belinda Brough?

Well, Mr. Brough pitied the poor love-sick swain, as he called me, so much, and felt such a warm sympathy in my well-being, that he insisted on my going down to Somersetshire with a couple of months' leave; and away I went, as happy as a lark, with a couple of brand-new suits from Von Stiltz's in my trunk (I had them made, looking forward to a certain event), and inside the trunk Lieutenant Smith's fleecy hosiery; wrapping up a parcel of our prospectuses and two letters from John Brough, Esq., to my mother our worthy annuitant, and to Mrs. Hoggarty our excellent shareholder. Mr. Brough said I

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was all that the fondest father could wish, that he considered me as his own boy, and that he earnestly begged Mrs. Hoggarty not to delay the sale of her little landed property, as land was high now and *must fall;* whereas the West Diddlesex Association shares were comparatively low, and must inevitably, in the course of a year or two, double, treble, quadruple their present value.

In this way I was prepared, and in this way I took leave of my dear Gus. As we parted in the yard of the 'Bolt-in-Tun,' Fleet Street, I felt that I never should go back to Salisbury Square again, and had made my little present to the landlady's family accordingly. She said I was the respectablest gentleman she had ever had in her house: nor was that saying much, for Bell Lane is in the Rules of the Fleet, and her lodgers used commonly to be prisoners on Rule from that place. As for Gus, the poor fellow cried and blubbered so that he could not eat a morsel of the muffins and grilled ham with which I treated him for breakfast in the 'Bolt-in-Tun' coffee-house; and when I went away was waving his hat and his handkerchief so in the archway of the coach-office that I do believe the wheels of the 'True Blue' went over his toes, for I heard him roaring as we passed through the arch. Ah! how different were my feelings as I sat proudly there on the box by the side of Jim Ward, the coachman, to those I had the last time I mounted that coach, parting from my dear Mary and coming to London with my DIAMOND-PIN!

When arrived near home (at Grumpley, three miles from our village, where the 'True Blue' generally stops to take a glass of ale at the Poppleton Arms) it was as if our Member, Mr. Poppleton himself, was come into the country, so great was the concourse of people assembled round the inn. And there was the landlord of the inn and all the people of the village. Then there was Tom Wheeler, the post-boy, from Mrs. Rincer's posting-hotel

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in our town; he was riding on the old bay posters, and they, Heaven bless us! were drawing my aunt's yellow chariot, in which she never went out but thrice in a year, and in which she now sat in her splendid cashmere shawl and a new hat and feather. She waved a white handkerchief out of the window, and Tom Wheeler shouted out 'Huzza!' as did a number of the little blackguard boys of Grumpley: who, to be sure, would huzza for anything. What a change on Tom Wheeler's part, however! I remembered only a few years before how he had whipped me from the box of the chaise, as I was hanging on for a ride behind.

Next to my aunt's carriage came the four-wheeled chaise of Lieutenant Smith, R.N., who was driving his old fat pony with his Lady by his side. I looked in the back seat of the chaise, and felt a little sad at seeing that *Somebody* was not there. But, O silly fellow! there was Somebody in the yellow chariot with my aunt, blushing like a peony, I declare, and looking so happy!—oh, so happy and pretty! She had a white dress, and a light blue and yellow scarf, which my aunt said were the Hoggarty colours; though what the Hoggartys had to do with light blue and yellow, I don't know to this day.

Well, the 'True Blue' guard made a great bellowing on his horn as his four horses dashed away; the boys shouted again; I was placed bodkin between Mrs. Hoggarty and Mary: Tom Wheeler cut into his bays; the Lieutenant (who had shaken me cordially by the hand, and whose big dog did not make the slightest attempt at biting me this time) beat his pony till its fat sides lathered again; and thus in this, I may say, unexampled procession, I arrived in triumph at our village.

My dear mother and the girls,—Heaven bless them!—nine of them in their nankeen spencers (I had something pretty in my trunk for each of them)—could not afford a carriage, but had posted themselves on the road near the village; and there was such a waving of hands

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and handkerchiefs: and though my aunt did not much notice them, except by a majestic toss of the head, which is pardonable in a woman of her property, yet Mary Smith did even more than I, and waved her hands as much as the whole nine. Ah! how my dear mother cried and blessed me when we met, and called me her soul's comfort and her darling boy, and looked at me as if I were a paragon of virtue and genius: whereas I was only a very lucky young fellow, that by the aid of kind friends had stepped rapidly into a very pretty property.

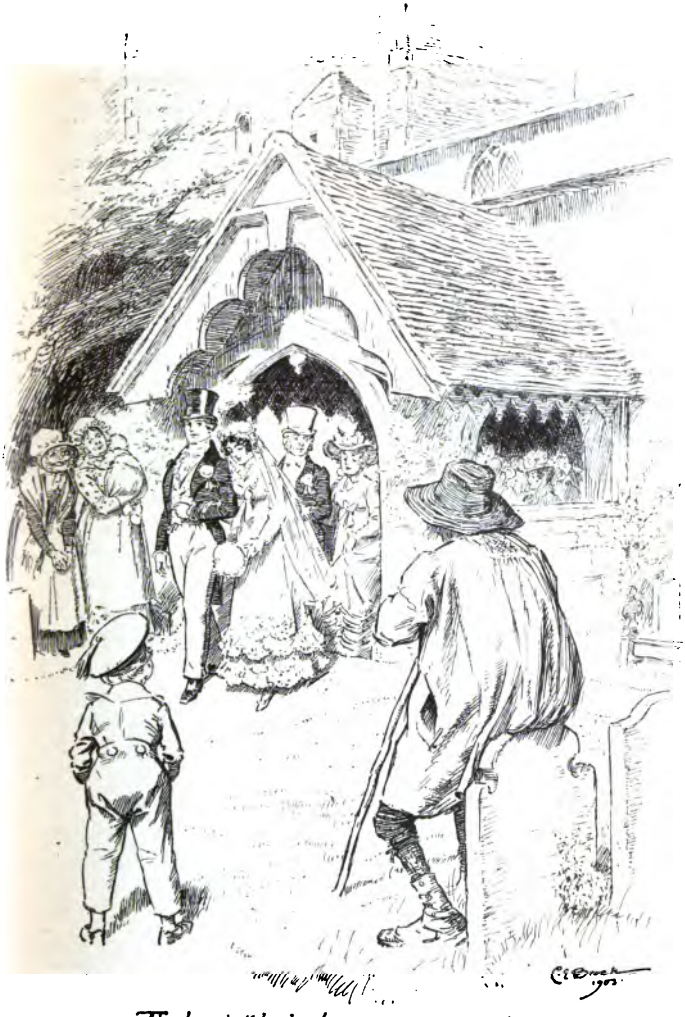
I was not to stay with my mother,—that had been arranged beforehand; for though she and Mrs. Hoggarty were not remarkably good friends, yet mother said it was for my benefit that I should stay with my aunt, and so gave up the pleasure of having me with her: and though hers was much the humbler house of the two, I need not say I preferred it far to Mrs. Hoggarty's more splendid one; let alone the horrible Rosolio, of which I was obliged now to drink gallons.

It was to Mrs. H.'s then we were driven: she had prepared a great dinner that evening, and hired an extra waiter, and on getting out of the carriage, she gave a sixpence to Tom Wheeler, saying that was for himself, and that she would settle with Mrs. Rincer for the horses afterwards. At which Tom flung the sixpence upon the ground, swore most violently, and was very justly called by my aunt an 'impertinent fellow.'

She had taken such a liking to me that she would hardly bear me out of her sight. We used to sit for morning after morning over her accounts, debating for hours together the propriety of selling the Slopperton property; but no arrangement was come to yet about it, for Hodge & Smithers could not get the price she wanted. And, moreover, she vowed that at her decease she would leave every shilling to me.

Hodge & Smithers, too, gave a grand party, and

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The happiest husband
of the prettiest girl in Somersetshire.

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treated me with marked consideration; as did every single person of the village. Those who could not afford to give dinners gave teas, and all drank the health of the young couple; and many a time after dinner or supper was my Mary made to blush by the allusions to the change in her condition.

The happy day for that ceremony was now fixed, and the 24th July 1823 saw me the happiest husband of the prettiest girl in Somersetshire. We were married from my mother's house, who would insist upon that at any rate, and the nine girls acted as bridesmaids; ay! and Gus Hoskins came from town express to be my groomsman, and had my old room at my mother's, and stayed with her for a week, and cast a sheep's-eye upon Miss Winny Titmarsh too, my dear fourth sister, as I afterwards learned.

My aunt was very kind upon the marriage ceremony, indeed. She had desired me some weeks previous to order three magnificent dresses for Mary from the celebrated Madame Mantalini of London, and some elegant trinkets and embroidered pocket-handkerchiefs from Howell & James's. These were sent down to me, and were to be *my* present to the bride; but Mrs. Hoggarty gave me to understand that I need never trouble myself about the payment of the bill, and I thought her conduct very generous. Also she lent us her chariot for the wedding journey, and made with her own hands a beautiful crimson satin reticule for Mrs. Samuel Titmarsh, her dear niece. It contained a huswife completely furnished with needles, &c., for she hoped Mrs. Titmarsh would never neglect her needle; and a purse containing some silver pennies, and a very curious pocket-piece. 'As long as you keep these, my dear,' said Mrs. Hoggarty, 'you will never want; and fervently —fervently do I pray that you will keep them.' In the carriage-pocket we found a paper of biscuits and a bottle of Rosolio. We laughed at this, and made it over to Tom

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Wheeler—who, however, did not seem to like it much better than we.

I need not say I was married in Mr. Von Stiltz's coat (the third and fourth coats, Heaven help us! in a year), and that I wore sparkling in my bosom the GREAT HOGGARTY DIAMOND.

CHAPTER IX

BRINGS BACK SAM, HIS WIFE, AUNT, AND DIAMOND TO LONDON

WE pleased ourselves during the honeymoon with forming plans for our life in London, and a pretty paradise did we build for ourselves! Well, we were but forty years old between us; and, for my part, I never found any harm come of castle-building, but a great deal of pleasure.

Before I left London I had, to say the truth, looked round me for a proper place, befitting persons of our small income; and Gus Hoskins and I, who hunted after office-hours in couples, had fixed on a very snug little cottage in Camden Town, where there was a garden that certain *small people* might play in when they came: a horse and gig-house, if ever we kept one—and why not, in a few years?—and a fine healthy air, at a reasonable distance from 'Change; all for £30 a year. I had described this little spot to Mary as enthusiastically as Sancho describes Lizias to Don Quixote; and my dear wife was delighted with the prospect of housekeeping there, vowed she would cook all the best dishes herself (especially jam-pudding, of which I confess I am very fond), and promised Gus that he should dine with us at Clematis Bower every Sunday: only he must not smoke those horrid cigars. As for Gus, he vowed he would have a room in the neighbourhood too, for he could not

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bear to go back to Bell Lane, where we two had been so happy together; and so good-natured Mary said she would ask my sister Winny to come and keep her company. At which Hoskins blushed, and said, 'Pooh! nonsense now.'

But all our hopes of a happy snug Clematis Lodge were dashed to the ground on our return from our little honeymoon excursion; when Mrs. Hoggarty informed us that she was sick of the country, and was determined to go to London with her dear nephew and niece, and keep house for them, and introduce them to her friends in the metropolis.

What could we do? We wished her at—Bath: certainly not in London. But there was no help for it; and we were obliged to bring her: for, as my mother said, if we offended her, her fortune would go out of our family; and were we two young people not likely to want it?

So we came to town rather dismally in the carriage, posting the whole way; for the carriage must be brought, and a person of my aunt's rank in life could not travel by the stage. And I had to pay £14 for the posters, which pretty nearly exhausted all my little hoard of cash.

First we went into lodgings,—into three sets in three weeks. We quarrelled with the first landlady, because my aunt vowed that she cut a slice off the leg of mutton which was served for our dinner; from the second lodgings we went because aunt vowed the maid would steal the candles; from the third we went because Aunt Hoggarty came down to breakfast the morning after our arrival with her face shockingly swelled and bitten by—never mind what. To cut a long tale short, I was half mad with the continual choppings and changings, and the long stories and scoldings of my aunt. As for her great acquaintances, none of them were in London; and she made it a matter of quarrel with me that I had

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not introduced her to John Brough, Esquire, M.P., and to Lord and Lady Tiptoff, her relatives.

Mr. Brough was at Brighton when we arrived in town; and on his return I did not care at first to tell our Director that I had brought my aunt with me, or mention my embarrassments for money. He looked rather serious when perforce I spoke of the latter to him and asked for an advance; but when he heard that my lack of money had been occasioned by the bringing of my aunt to London, his tone instantly changed. 'That, my dear boy, alters the question; Mrs. Hoggarty is of an age when all things must be yielded to her. Here are a hundred pounds; and I beg you to draw upon me whenever you are in the least in want of money.' This gave me breathing-time until she should pay her share of the household expenses. And the very next day Mr. and Mrs. John Brough, in their splendid carriage-and-four, called upon Mrs. Hoggarty and my wife at our lodgings in Lamb's Conduit Street.

It was on the very day when my poor aunt appeared with her face in that sad condition; and she did not fail to inform Mrs. Brough of the cause, and to state that at Castle Hoggarty, or at her country place in Somersetshire, she had never heard or thought of such vile odious things.

'Gracious heavens!' shouted John Brough, Esquire, 'a lady of your rank to suffer in this way!—the excellent relative of my dear boy Titmarsh! Never, madam—never let it be said that Mrs. Hoggarty of Castle Hoggarty should be subject to such horrible humiliation, while John Brough has a home to offer her,—a humble, happy, Christian home, madam; though unlike, perhaps, the splendour to which you have been accustomed in the course of your distinguished career. Isabella, my love! —Belinda! speak to Mrs. Hoggarty. Tell her that John Brough's house is hers from garret to cellar. I repeat it, madam, from garret to cellar. I desire—I

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insist—I order, that Mrs. Hoggarty of Castle Hoggarty's trunks should be placed this instant in my carriage! Have the goodness to look to them yourself, Mrs. Titmarsh, and see that your dear aunt's comforts are better provided for than they have been.'

Mary went away rather wondering at this order. But, to be sure, Mr. Brough was a great man, and her Samuel's benefactor; and though the silly child absolutely began to cry as she packed and toiled at aunt's enormous valises, yet she performed the work, and came down with a smiling face to my aunt, who was entertaining Mr and Mrs. Brough with a long and particular account of the balls at the Castle, in Dublin, in Lord Charleville's time.

'I have packed the trunks, aunt, but I am not strong enough to bring them down,' said Mary.

'Certainly not, certainly not,' said John Brough, perhaps a little ashamed. 'Hallo! George, Frederic, Augustus, come upstairs this instant, and bring down the trunks of Mrs. Hoggarty of Castle Hoggarty, which this young lady will show you.'

Nay, so great was Mr. Brough's condescension, that when some of his fashionable servants refused to meddle with the trunks, he himself seized a pair of them with both hands, carried them to the carriage, and shouted loud enough for all Lamb's Conduit Street to hear, 'John Brough is not proud—no, no; and if his footmen are two high and mighty, he'll show them a lesson of humility.'

Mrs. Brough was for running downstairs too, and taking the trunks from her husband; but they were too heavy for her, so she contented herself with sitting on one, and asking all persons who passed her, whether John Brough was not an angel of a man?

In this way it was that my aunt left us. I was not aware of her departure, for I was at the office at the time; and strolling back at five with Gus, saw my dear

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Mary smiling and bobbing from the window, and beckoning to us both to come up. This I thought was very strange, because Mrs. Hoggarty could not abide Hoskins, and indeed had told me repeatedly that either she or he must quit the house. Well, we went upstairs, and there was Mary, who had dried her tears and received us with the most smiling of faces, and laughed and clapped her hands, and danced, and shook Gus's hand. And what do you think the little rogue proposed? I am blest if she did not say she would like to go to Vauxhall!

As dinner was laid for three persons only, Gus took his seat with fear and trembling; and then Mrs. Sam Titmarsh related the circumstances which had occurred, and how Mrs. Hoggarty had been whisked away to Fulham in Mr. Brough's splendid carriage-and-four. 'Let her go,' I am sorry to say, said I; and indeed we relished our veal-cutlets and jam-pudding a great deal more than Mrs. Hoggarty did her dinner off plate at the Rookery.

We had a very merry party to Vauxhall, Gus insisting on standing treat; and you may be certain that my aunt, whose absence was prolonged for three weeks, was heartily welcome to remain away, for we were much merrier and more comfortable without her. My little Mary used to make my breakfast before I went to office of mornings; and on Sundays we had a holiday, and saw the dear little children eat their boiled beef and potatoes at the Foundling, and heard the beautiful music: but, beautiful as it is, I think the children were a more beautiful sight still, and the look of their innocent happy faces was better than the best sermon. On week-days Mrs. Titmarsh would take a walk about five o'clock in the evening on the *left*-hand side of Lamb's Conduit Street (as you go to Holborn)—ay, and sometimes pursue her walk as far as Snow Hill, when two young gents from the I. W. D. Fire and Life were pretty sure to meet her; and then how happily we all trudged off

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to dinner! Once we came up as a monster of a man, with high heels and a gold-headed cane, and whiskers all over his face, was grinning under Mary's bonnet, and chattering to her, close to Day & Martin's Blacking Manufactory (not near such a handsome thing then as it is now)—there was the man chattering and ogling his best, when who should come up but Gus and I? And in the twinkling of a pegpost, as Lord Duberley says, my gentleman was seized by the collar of his coat and found himself sprawling under a stand of hackney-coaches; where all the watermen were grinning at him. The best of it was he left his *head of hair and whiskers* in my hand: but Mary said, 'Don't be hard upon him, Samuel; it's only a Frenchman.' And so we gave him his wig back, which one of the grinning stable-boys put on and carried to him as he lay in the straw.

He shrieked out something about 'arrêtez,' and 'Français,' and 'champ-d'honneur;' but we walked on, Gus putting his thumb to his nose and stretching out his finger at Master Frenchman. This made everybody laugh; and so the adventure ended.

About ten days after my aunt's departure came a letter from her, of which I give a copy:—

'My Dear Nephew,—It was my earnest whish e'er this to have returned to London, where I am sure you and my niece Titmarsh miss me very much, and where she, poor thing, quite inexperienced in the ways of "the great metropulus," in aconamy, and indeed in every qualaty requasit in a good wife and the mistress of a famaly, can hardly manidge, I am sure, without me.

'Tell her *on no account* to pay more than 6½d. for the prime pieces, 4¾d. for soup meat; and that the very best of London butter is to be had for 8½d.; of course, for pudns and the kitchin you'll employ a commoner sort. My trunks were sadly packed by Mrs. Titmarsh, and the hasp of the portmantyou-lock has gone through my yellow satn. I have darned it, and woar it already twice, at two ellygant (though

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quiat) evening-parties given by my *hospatable* host; and my pegreen velvet on Saturday at a grand dinner, when Lord Scaramouch handed me to table. Everything was in the most *sumptious style.* Soup top and bottom (white and brown), removed by turbit and sammon with *immense boles of lobster sauce.* Lobsters alone cost 15s. Turbit, three guineas. The hole sammon, weighing, I'm sure, 15 lbs., and *never seen* at table again; not a bitt of pickled sammon the hole weak afterwards. This kind of extravigance would *just suit* Mrs. Sam Titmarsh, who, as I always say, burns *the candle at both ends.* Well, young people, it is lucky for you you have an old aunt who knows better, and has a long purse; without witch, I dare say, *some* folks would be glad to see her out of doors. I don't mean you, Samuel, who have, I must say, been a dutiful nephew to me. Well, I dare say I shan't live long, and some folks won't be sorry to have me in my grave.

'Indeed, on Sunday I was taken in my stomick very ill, and thought it might have been the lobster-sauce; but Doctor Blogg, who was called in, said it was, he very much feared, *cumsumptive;* but gave me some pills and a draft w^h^ made me better. Please call upon him—he lives at Pimlico, and you can walk out there after office hours—and present him with £1, 1s., with my compliments. I have no money here but a £10 note, the rest being locked up in my box at Lamb's Cundit Street.

'Although the flesh is not neglected in Mr. B.'s sumptious establishment, I can assure you the *sperrit* is likewise cared for. Mr. B. reads and igspounds every morning; and o but his exorcises refresh the hungry sole before breakfast! Everything is in the handsomest style,—silver and goold plate at breakfast, lunch, and dinner; and his crest and motty, a beehive, with the Latn word *Industria,* meaning industry, on *everything*—even on the chany juggs and things in my beddroom. On Sunday we were favoured by a special outpouring from the Rev. Grimes Wapshot, of the Amabaptist Congrigation here, and who egshorted for 3 hours in the afternoon in Mr. B.'s private chapel. As the widow of a Hoggarty, I have always been a staunch supporter of the established Church of England and Ireland; but I must say Mr. Wapshot's stirring way was far superior to that of the Rev. Bland Blenkinsop of

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the Establishment, who lifted up his voice after dinner for a short discourse of two hours.

'Mrs. Brough is, between ourselves, a poor creature, and has no sperrit of her own. As for Miss B., she is so saucy that once I promised to box her years; and would have left the house, had not Mr. B. taken my part, and Miss made me a suitable apollogy.

'I don't know when I shall return to town, being made really so welcome here. Dr. Blogg says the air of Fulham is the best in the world for my simtums; and as the ladies of the house do not choose to walk out with me, the Rev. Grimes Wapshot has often been kind enough to lend me his arm, and 'tis sweet with such a guide to wander both to Putney and Wandsworth, and igsamin the wonderful works of nature. I have spoke to him about the Slopperton property, and he is not of Mr. B.'s opinion that I should sell it; but on this point I shall follow my own counsel.

'Meantime you must gett into more comfortable lodgings, and lett my bedd be warmed every night, and of rainy days have a fire in the grate: and let Mrs. Titmarsh look up my blue silk dress, and turn it against I come; and there is my purple spencer she can have for herself; and I hope she does not wear those three splendid gowns you gave her, but keep them until *better times*. I shall soon introduse her to my friend Mr. Brough and others of my acquaintances; and am always Your loving AUNT.

'I have ordered a chest of the Rosolio to be sent from Somersetshire. When it comes, please to send half down here (paying the carriage of course.) 'Twill be an acceptable present to my kind entertainer, Mr. B.'

This letter was brought to me by Mr. Brough himself at the office, who apologised to me for having broken the seal by inadvertence; for the letter had been mingled with some more of his own, and he opened it without looking at the superscription. Of course he had not read it, and I was glad of that; for I should not have liked him to see my aunt's opinion of his daughter and lady.

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The next day, a gentleman at 'Tom's Coffee-house,' Cornhill, sent me word at the office that he wanted particularly to speak to me: and I stepped thither, and found my old friend Smithers, of the house of Hodge & Smithers, just off the coach, with his carpet-bag between his legs.

'Sam, my boy,' said he, 'you are your aunt's heir, and I have a piece of news for you regarding her property which you ought to know. She wrote us down a letter for a chest of that home-made wine of hers which she calls Rosolio, and which lies in our warehouse along with her furniture.'

'Well,' says I, smiling, 'she may part with as much Rosolio as she likes for me. I cede all my right.'

'Psha!' says Smithers, 'it's not that; though her furniture puts us to a deuced inconvenience, to be sure—it's not that: but, in the postscript of her letter, she orders us to advertise the Slopperton and Squashtail estates for immediate sale, as she purposes placing her capital elsewhere.'

I knew that the Slopperton and Squashtail property had been the source of a very pretty income to Messrs. Hodge & Smithers, for aunt was always at law with her tenants, and paid dearly for her litigious spirit; so that Mr. Smithers's concern regarding the sale of it did not seem to me to be quite disinterested.

'And did you come to London, Mr. Smithers, expressly to acquaint me with this fact? It seems to me you had much better have obeyed my aunt's instructions at once, or go to her at Fulham, and consult with her on this subject.'

''Sdeath, Mr. Titmarsh! don't you see that if she makes a sale of her property, she will hand over the money to Brough; and if Brough gets the money he——'

'Will give her seven per cent. for it instead of three—there's no harm in that.

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'But there's such a thing as security, look you. He is a warm man, certainly—very warm—quite respectable—most undoubtedly respectable. But who knows? A panic may take place; and then these five hundred companies in which he is engaged may bring him to ruin. There's the Ginger Beer Company, of which Brough is a director; awkward reports are abroad concerning it. The Consolidated Baffin's Bay Muff and Tippet Company—the shares are down very low, and Brough is a director there. The Patent Pump Company—shares at 65, and a fresh call, which nobody will pay.'

'Nonsense, Mr. Smithers! Has not Mr. Brough five hundred thousand pounds' worth of shares in the INDEPENDENT WEST DIDDLESEX, and is THAT at a discount? Who recommended my aunt to invest her money in that speculation, I should like to know?' I had him there.

'Well, well, it is a very good speculation, certainly, and has brought you three hundred a year, Sam, my boy; and you may thank us for the interest we took in you (indeed, we loved you as a son, and Miss Hodge has not recovered a certain marriage yet). You don't intend to rebuke us for making your fortune, do you?'

'No, hang it, no!' says I, and shook hands with him, and accepted a glass of sherry and biscuits, which he ordered forthwith.

Smithers returned, however, to the charge. 'Sam,' he said, 'mark my words, and *take your aunt away from the Rookery.* She wrote to Mrs. S. a long account of a reverend gent with whom she walks out there,—the Reverend Grimes Wapshot. That man has an eye upon her. He was tried at Lancaster in the year '14 for forgery, and narrowly escaped with his neck. Have a care of him—he has an eye to her money.'

'Nay,' said I, taking out Mrs. Hoggarty's letter: 'read for yourself.'

He read it over very carefully, seemed to be amused

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by it; and as he returned it to me, 'Well, Sam,' he said, 'I have only two favours to ask of you: one is, not to mention that I am in town to any living soul; and the other is to give me a dinner in Lamb's Conduit Street with your pretty wife.'

'I promise you both gladly,' I said, laughing. 'But if you dine with us, your arrival in town must be known, for my friend Gus Hoskins dines with us likewise; and has done so nearly every day since my aunt went.'

He laughed too, and said, 'We must swear Gus to secrecy over a bottle.' And so we parted till dinner-time.

The indefatigable lawyer pursued his attack after dinner, and was supported by Gus and by my wife too; who certainly was disinterested in the matter—more than disinterested, for she would have given a great deal to be spared my aunt's company. But she said she saw the force of Mr. Smithers's arguments, and I admitted their justice with a sigh. However, I rode my high horse, and vowed that my aunt should do what she liked with her money; and that I was not the man who would influence her in any way in the disposal of it.

After tea the two gents walked away together, and Gus told me that Smithers had asked him a thousand questions about the office, about Brough, about me and my wife, and everything concerning us. 'You are a lucky fellow, Mr. Hoskins, and seem to be the friend of this charming young couple,' said Smithers; and Gus confessed he was, and said he had dined with us fifteen times in six weeks, and that a better and more hospitable fellow than I did not exist. This I state not to trumpet my own praises,—no, no; but because these questions of Smithers's had a good deal to do with the subsequent events narrated in this little history.

Being seated at dinner the next day off the cold leg of mutton that Smithers had admired so the day before, and Gus as usual having his legs under our mahogany, a

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hackney-coach drove up to the door, which we did not much heed; a step was heard on the floor, which we hoped might be for the two-pair lodger, when who should burst into the room but Mrs. Hoggarty herself! Gus, who was blowing the froth off a pot of porter preparatory to a delicious drink of the beverage, and had been making us die of laughing with his stories and jokes, laid down the pewter pot as Mrs. H. came in, and looked quite sick and pale. Indeed, we all felt a little uneasy.

My aunt looked haughtily in Mary's face, then fiercely at Gus, and saying, 'It is too true—my poor boy—*already!*' flung herself hysterically into my arms, and swore, almost choking, that she would never never leave me.

I could not understand the meaning of this extraordinary agitation on Mrs. Hoggarty's part nor could any of us. She refused Mary's hand when the poor thing rather nervously offered it; and when Gus timidly said, 'I think, Sam, I'm rather in the way here, and perhaps —had better go,' Mrs. H. looked him full in the face, pointed to the door majestically with her forefinger, and said, 'I think, sir, you *had* better go.'

'I hope Mr. Hoskins will stay as long as he pleases,' said my wife with spirit.

'*Of course* you hope so, madam,' answered Mrs. Hoggarty, very sarcastic. But Mary's speech and my aunt's were quite lost upon Gus; for he had instantly run to his hat, and I heard him tumbling downstairs.

The quarrel ended, as usual, by Mary's bursting into a fit of tears, and by my aunt's repeating the assertion that it was not too late, she trusted; and from that day forth she would never never leave me.

'What could have made aunt return and be so angry?' said I to Mary that night, as we were in our own room; but my wife protested she did not know: and it was only some time after that I found out the reason of this quarrel, and of Mrs. H.'s sudden reappearance.

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The horrible fat coarse little Smithers told me the matter as a very good joke, only the other year, when be showed me the letter of Hickson, Dixon, Paxton & Jackson, which has before been quoted in my Memoirs.

'Sam my boy,' said he, 'you were determined to leave Mrs. Hoggarty in Brough's clutches at the Rookery, and I was determined to have her away. I resolved to kill two of your mortal enemies with one stone as it were. It was quite clear to me that the Reverend Grimes Wapshot had an eye to your aunt's fortune; and that Mr. Brough had similar predatory intentions regarding her. Predatory is a mild word, Sam: if I had said robbery at once, I should express my meaning clearer.

'Well, I took the Fulham stage, and arriving, made straight for the lodgings of the reverend gentleman. "Sir," said I, on finding that worthy gent,—he was drinking warm brandy-and-water, Sam, at two o'clock in the day, or at least the room smelt very strongly of that beverage—"Sir," says I, "you were tried for forgery in the year '14, at Lancaster assizes."

'"And acquitted, sir. My innocence was by Providence made clear," said Wapshot.

'"But you were not acquitted of embezzlement in '16, sir," says I, "and passed two years in York Gaol in consequence." I knew the fellow's history, for I had a writ out against him when he was a preacher at Clifton. I followed up my blow. "Mr. Wapshot," said I, "you are making love to an excellent lady now at the house of Mr. Brough: if you do not promise to give up all pursuit of her, I will expose you."

'"I *have* promised," said Wapshot, rather surprised, and looking more easy. "I have given my solemn promise to Mr. Brough, who was with me this very morning, storming, and scolding, and swearing. Oh, sir, it would have frightened you to hear a Christian babe like him swear as he did."

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'"Mr. Brough been here?" says I, rather astonished.

'"Yes; I suppose you are both here on the same scent," says Wapshot. "You want to marry the widow with the Slopperton and Squashtail estate, do you? Well, well, have your way. I've promised not to have anything more to do with the widow, and a Wapshot's honour is sacred."

'"I suppose, sir," says I, "Mr. Brough has threatened to kick you out of doors, if you call again."

'"You *have* been with him, I see," says the reverend gent, with a shrug: then I remembered what you had told me of the broken seal of your letter, and have not the slightest doubt that Brough opened and read every word of it.

'Well, the first bird was bagged: both I and Brough had had a shot at him. Now I had to fire at the whole Rookery; and off I went, primed and loaded, sir,—primed and loaded.

'It was past eight when I arrived, and I saw, after I passed the lodge-gates, a figure that I knew, walking in the shrubbery—that of your respected aunt, sir: but I wished to meet the amiable ladies of the house before I saw her; because look, friend Titmarsh, I saw by Mrs. Hoggarty's letter that she and they were at daggers drawn, and hoped to get her out of the house at once by means of a quarrel with them.'

I laughed, and owned that Mr. Smithers was a very cunning fellow.

'As luck would have it,' continued he, 'Miss Brough was in the drawing-room twangling on a guitar, and singing most atrociously out of tune; but as I entered at the door, I cried "Hush!" to the footman, as loud as possible, stood stock-still, and then walked forward on tip-toe lightly. Miss B. could see in the glass every movement that I made; she pretended not to see, however, and finished the song with a regular roulade.

'"Gracious Heaven!" said I, "do, madam, pardon me

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for interrupting that delicious harmony,—for coming unaware upon it, for daring uninvited to listen to it."

'"Do you come from mamma, sir?" said Miss Brough, with as much graciousness as her physiognomy could command. "I am Miss Brough, sir."

'"I wish, madam, you would let me not breathe a word regarding my business until you have sung another charming strain."

'She did not sing, but looked pleased, and said, "La! sir, what is your business?"

'"My business is with a lady, your respected father's guest in this house."

'"Oh, Mrs. Hoggarty!" says Miss Brough, flouncing towards the bell, and ringing it. "John, send to Mrs. Hoggarty, in the shrubbery; here is a gentleman who wants to see her."

'"I know," continued I, "Mrs. Hoggarty's peculiarities as well as any one, madam; and aware that those and her education are not such as to make her a fit companion for you, I know you do not like her; she has written to us in Somersetshire that you do not like her."

'"What! she has been abusing us to her friends, has she?" cried Miss Brough (it was the very point I wished to insinuate). "If she does not like us, why does she not leave us?"

'"She *has* made rather a long visit," said I: "and I am sure that her nephew and niece are longing for her return. Pray, madam, do not move, for you may aid me in the object for which I come."

'The object for which I came, sir, was to establish a regular battle-royal between the two ladies; at the end of which I intended to appeal to Mrs. Hoggarty, and say that she ought really no longer to stay in a house with the members of which she had such unhappy differences. Well, sir, the battle-royal was fought,—Miss Belinda opening the fire, by saying she understood

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Mrs. Hoggarty had been calumniating her to her friends. But though at the end of it, Miss rushed out of the room in a rage, and vowed she would leave her home unless that odious woman left it, your dear aunt said, "Ha, ha! I know the minx's vile stratagems; but thank Heaven! I have a good heart, and my religion enables me to forgive her. I shall not leave her excellent papa's house, or vex by my departure that worthy admirable man."

'I then tried Mrs. H. on the score of compassion. "Your niece," said I, "Mrs. Titmarsh, madam, has been of late, Sam says, rather poorly,—qualmish of mornings, madam,—a little nervous, and low in spirits,—symptoms, madam, that are scarcely to be mistaken in a young married person."

'Mrs. Hoggarty said she had an admirable cordial that she would send Mrs. Samuel Titmarsh, and she was perfectly certain it would do her good.

'With very great unwillingness I was obliged now to bring my last reserve into the field, and may tell you what that was, Sam my boy, now that the matter is so long passed. "Madam," said I, "there's a matter about which I must speak, though indeed I scarcely dare. I dined with your nephew yesterday, and met at his table a young man—a young man of low manners, but evidently one who has blinded your nephew, and I too much fear has succeeded in making an impression upon your niece. His name is Hoskins, madam; and when I state that he who was never in the house during your presence there, has dined with your too confiding nephew sixteen times in three weeks, I may leave you to imagine what I dare not—dare not imagine myself."

'The shot told. Your aunt bounced up at once, and in ten minutes more was in my carriage, on our way back to London. There, sir, was not *that* generalship!'

'And you played this pretty trick off at my wife's expense, Mr. Smithers!' said I.

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'At your wife's expense, certainly; but for the benefit of both of you.'

'It's lucky, sir, that you are an old man,' I replied, 'and that the affair happened ten years ago; or, by the Lord, Mr. Smithers, I would have given you such a horsewhipping as you never heard of!'

But this was the way in which Mrs. Hoggarty was brought back to her relatives; and this was the reason why we took that house in Bernard Street, the doings at which must now be described.

CHAPTER X

OF SAM'S PRIVATE AFFAIRS, AND OF THE FIRM OF BROUGH & HOFF

We took a genteel house in Bernard Street, Russell Square, and my aunt sent for all her furniture from the country; which would have filled two such houses, but which came pretty cheap to us young housekeepers, as we had only to pay the carriage of the goods from Bristol.

When I brought Mrs. H. her third half-year's dividend, having not for four months touched a shilling of her money, I must say she gave me £50 of the £80, and told me that was ample pay for the board and lodging of a poor old woman like her, who did not eat more than a sparrow.

I have myself, in the country, seen her eat nine sparrows in a pudding; but she was rich, and I could not complain. If she saved £600 a year, at the least, by living with us, why, all the savings would one day come to me; and so Mary and I consoled ourselves, and tried to manage matters as well as we might. It was no easy task to keep a mansion in Bernard Street and save money

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out of £470 a year, which was my income. But what a lucky fellow I was to have such an income!

As Mrs. Hoggarty left the Rookery in Smithers's carriage, Mr. Brough, with his four greys, was entering the lodge-gate; and I should like to have seen the looks of these two gentlemen, as the one was carrying the other's prey off, out of his own very den, under his very nose.

He came to see her the next day, and protested that he would not leave the house until she left it with him: that he had heard of his daughter's infamous conduct, and had seen her in tears—'in tears, madam, and on her knees, imploring Heaven to pardon her!' But Mr. B. was obliged to leave the house without my aunt, who had a *causa major* for staying, and hardly allowed poor Mary out of her sight,—opening every one of the letters that came into the house directed to my wife, and suspecting hers to everybody. Mary never told me of all this pain for many many years afterwards; but had always a smiling face for her husband when he came home from his work. As for poor Gus, my aunt had so frightened him, that he never once showed his nose in the place all the time we lived there; but used to be content with news of Mary, of whom he was as fond as he was of me.

Mr. Brough, when my aunt left him, was in a furious ill-humour with me. He found fault with me ten times a day, and openly, before the gents of the office; but I let him one day know pretty smartly that I was not only a servant, but a considerable shareholder in the company; that I defied him to find fault with my work or my regularity; and that I was not minded to receive any insolent language from him or any man. He said it was always so: that he had never cherished a young man in his bosom, but the ingrate had turned on him; that he was accustomed to wrong and undutifulness from his children, and that he would pray that the sin might be

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forgiven me. A moment before he had been cursing and swearing at me, and speaking to me as if I had been his shoeblack. But, look you, I was not going to put up with any more of Madam Brough's airs, or of his. With *me* they might act as they thought fit; but I did not choose that my wife should be passed over by them, as she had been in the matter of the visit to Fulham.

Brough ended by warning me of Hodge & Smithers. 'Beware of these men,' said he; 'but for my honesty, your aunt's landed property would have been sacrificed by these cormorants; and when, for her benefit—which you, obstinate young man, will not perceive—I wished to dispose of her land, her attorneys actually had the audacity—the unchristian avarice I may say—to ask ten per cent. commission on the sale.'

There might be some truth in this, I thought: at any rate, when rogues fall out, honest men come by their own: and now I began to suspect, I am sorry to say, that both the attorney and the Director had a little of the rogue in their composition. It was especially about my wife's fortune that Mr. B. showed *his* cloven foot: for proposing, as usual, that I should purchase shares with it in our Company, I told him that my wife was a minor and as such her little fortune was vested out of my control altogether. He flung away in a rage at this; and I soon saw that he did not care for me any more, by Abednego's manner to me. No more holidays, no more advances of money, had I: on the contrary, the private clerkship at £150 was abolished, and I found myself on my £250 a year again. Well, what then? it was always a good income, and I did my duty, and laughed at the Director.

About this time, in the beginning of 1824, the Jamaica Ginger Beer Company shut up shop—exploded, as Gus said, with a bang! The Patent Pump shares were down to £15 upon a paid-up capital of £65. Still ours were at a high premium; and the Independent

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West Diddlesex held its head up as proudly as any office in London. Roundhand's abuse had had some influence against the Director, certainly; for he hinted at malversation of shares: but the Company still stood as united as the Hand-in-Hand, and as firm as the Rock.

To return to the state of affairs in Bernard Street, Russell Square: my aunt's old furniture crammed our little rooms; and my aunt's enormous old jingling grand piano, with crooked legs and half the strings broken, occupied three-fourths of the little drawing-room. Here used Mrs. H. to sit, and play us, for hours, sonatas that were in fashion in Lord Charleville's time; and sung with a cracked voice, till it was all that we could do to refrain from laughing.

And it was queer to remark the change that had taken place in Mrs. Hoggarty's character now: for whereas she was in the country among the topping persons of the village, and quite content with a tea-party at six and a game of twopenny whist afterwards,—in London she would never dine till seven; would have a fly from the mews to drive in the Park twice a week; cut and uncut, and ripped up and twisted over and over, all her old gowns, flounces, caps, and fallals, and kept my poor Mary from morning till night altering them to the present mode. Mrs. Hoggarty, moreover, appeared in a new wig; and, I am sorry to say, turned out with such a pair of red cheeks as Nature never gave her, and as made all the people in Bernard Street stare, where they are not as yet used to such fashions.

Moreover, she insisted upon our establishing a servant in livery,—a boy, that is, of about sixteen,—who was dressed in one of the old liveries that she had brought with her from Somersetshire, decorated with new cuffs and collars, and new buttons: on the latter were represented the united crests of the Titmarshes and Hoggartys, viz., a tomtit rampant and a hog in armour. I thought this livery and crest-buttons rather absurd, I must con-

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fess; though my family *is* very ancient. And heavens! what a roar of laughter was raised in the office one day, when the little servant in the big livery, with the immense cane, walked in and brought me a message from Mrs. Hoggarty of Castle Hoggarty! Furthermore, all letters were delivered on a silver tray. If we had had a baby, I believe aunt would have had it down on the tray: but there was as yet no foundation for Mr. Smithers's insinuation upon that score, any more than for his other cowardly fabrication before narrated. Aunt and Mary used to walk gravely up and down the New Road, with the boy following with his great gold-headed stick; but though there was all this ceremony and parade, and aunt still talked of her acquaintances, we did not see a single person from week's end to week's end, and a more dismal house than ours could hardly be found in London town.

On Sundays Mrs. Hoggarty used to go to St. Pancras Church, then just built, and as handsome as Covent Garden Theatre; and of evenings, to a meeting-house of the Anabaptists; and *that* day, at least, Mary and I had to ourselves,—for we chose to have seats at the Foundling, and heard the charming music there, and my wife used to look wistfully in the pretty children's faces,—and so, for the matter of that, did I. It was not, however, till a year after our marriage that she spoke in a way which shall be here passed over, but which filled both her and me with inexpressible joy.

I remember she had the news to give me on the very day when the Muff and Tippet Company shut up, after swallowing a capital of £300,000 as some said, and nothing to show for it except a treaty with some Indians, who had afterwards tomahawked the agent of the Company. Some people said there were no Indians, and no agent to be tomahawked at all; but that the whole had been invented in a house in Crutched Friars. Well, I pitied poor Tidd, whose £20,000 were thus gone in a

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year, and whom I met in the City that day with a most ghastly face. He had £1000 of debts, he said, and talked of shooting himself; but he was only arrested, and passed a long time in the Fleet. Mary's delightful news, however, soon put Tidd and the Muff and Tippet Company out of my head; as you may fancy.

Other circumstances now occurred in the City of London which seemed to show that our Director was—what is not to be found in Johnson's Dictionary—rather shaky. Three of his companies had broken; four more were in a notoriously insolvent state; and even at the meetings of the directors of the West Diddlesex, some stormy words passed, which ended in the retirement of several of the board. Friends of Mr. B.'s filled up their places: Mr. Puppet, Mr. Straw, Mr. Query, and other respectable gents, coming forward and joining the concern. Brough & Hoff dissolved partnership; and Mr. B. said he had quite enough to do to manage the I. W. D., and intended gradually to retire from the other affairs. Indeed, such an Association as ours was enough work for any man, let alone the parliamentary duties which Brough was called on to perform, and the seventy-two lawsuits which burst upon him as principal director of the late companies.

Perhaps I should here describe the desperate attempts made by Mrs. Hoggarty to introduce herself into genteel life. Strange to say, although we had my Lord Tiptoff's word to the contrary, she insisted upon it that she and Lady Drum were intimately related; and no sooner did she read in the *Morning Post* of the arrival of her Ladyship and her grand-daughters in London, than she ordered the fly before mentioned, and left cards at their respective houses: her card, that is—'MRS. HOGGARTY of CASTLE HOGGARTY,' magnificently engraved in Gothic letters and flourishes; and ours, viz., 'Mr. and Mrs. S. Titmarsh,' which she had printed for the purpose.

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She would have stormed Lady Jane Preston's door and forced her way upstairs, in spite of Mary's entreaties to the contrary, had the footman who received her card given her the least encouragement; but that functionary, no doubt struck by the oddity of her appearance, placed himself in the front of the door, and declared that he had positive orders not to admit any strangers to his lady. On which Mrs. Hoggarty clenched her fist out of the coach-window, and promised that she would have him turned away.

Yellowplush only burst out laughing at this; and though Aunt wrote a most indignant letter to Mr. Edmund Preston, complaining of the insolence of the servants of that right honourable gent, Mr. Preston did not take any notice of her letter, further than to return it, with a desire that he might not be troubled with such impertinent visits for the future. A pretty day we had of it when this letter arrived, owing to my aunt's disappointment and rage in reading the contents; for when Solomon brought up the note on the silver tea-tray as usual, my aunt, seeing Mr. Preston's seal and name at the corner of the letter (which is the common way of writing adopted by those official gents)—my aunt, I say, seeing his name and seal, cried, '*Now*, Mary, who is right?' and betted my wife a sixpence that the envelope contained an invitation to dinner. She never paid the sixpence, though she lost, but contented herself by abusing Mary all day, and said I was a poor-spirited sneak for not instantly horsewhipping Mr. P. A pretty joke, indeed! They would have hanged me in those days, as they did the man who shot Mr. Perceval.

And now I should be glad to enlarge upon that experience in genteel life which I obtained through the perseverance of Mrs. Hoggarty; but it must be owned that my opportunities were but few, lasting only for the brief period of six months: and also, genteel society has been fully described already by various authors of novels

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whose names need not here be set down, but who, being themselves connected with the aristocracy, viz., as members of noble families, or as footmen or hangers-on thereof, naturally understand their subject a great deal better than a poor young fellow from a fire-office can.

There was our celebrated adventure in the Opera House, whither Mrs. H. would insist upon conducting us; and where, in a room of the establishment called the crush-room, where the ladies and gents after the music and dancing await the arrival of their carriages (a pretty figure did our little Solomon cut, by the way, with his big cane, among the gentlemen of the shoulder-knot assembled in the lobby!)—where, I say, in the crush-room, Mrs. H. rushed up to old Lady Drum, whom I pointed out to her, and insisted upon claiming relationship with her Ladyship. But my Lady Drum had only a memory when she chose, as I may say, and had entirely on this occasion thought fit to forget her connection with the Titmarshes and Hoggarties. Far from recognising us, indeed, she called Mrs. Hoggarty an 'ojus 'oman,' and screamed out as loud as possible for a police-officer.

This and other rebuffs made my aunt perceive the vanities of this wicked world, as she said, and threw her more and more into really serious society. She formed several very valuable acquaintances, she said, at the Independent Chapel; and among others, lighted upon her friend of the Rookery, Mr. Grimes Wapshot. We did not know then the interview which he had had with Mr. Smithers, nor did Grimes think proper to acquaint us with the particulars of it; but though I did acquaint Mrs. H. with the fact that her favourite preacher had been tried for forgery, *she* replied that she considered the story an atrocious calumny; and *he* answered by saying that Mary and I were in lamentable darkness, and that we should infallibly find the way to a certain bottomless pit, of which he seemed to know a great deal. Under

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the reverend gentleman's guidance and advice, she, after a time, separated from St. Pancras altogether—'*sat under him*,' as the phrase is, regularly thrice a week—began to labour in the conversion of the poor of Bloomsbury and St. Giles's, and made a deal of baby-linen for distribution among those benighted people. She did not make any, however, for Mrs. Sam Titmarsh, who now showed signs that such would be speedily necessary, but let Mary (and my mother and sisters in Somersetshire) provide what was requisite for the coming event. I am not, indeed, sure that she did not say it was wrong on our parts to make any such provision, and that we ought to let the morrow provide for itself. At any rate, the Reverend Grimes Wapshot drank a deal of brandy-and-water at our house, and dined there even oftener than poor Gus used to do.

But I had little leisure to attend to him and his doings; for I must confess at this time I was growing very embarrassed in my circumstances, and was much harassed both as a private and public character.

As regards the former, Mrs. Hoggarty had given me £50; but out of that £50 I had to pay a journey post from Somersetshire, all the carriage of her goods from the country, the painting, papering, and carpeting of my house, the brandy and strong liquors drunk by the Reverend Grimes and his friends (for the reverend gent said that Rosolio did not agree with him): and finally, a thousand small bills and expenses incident to all housekeepers in the town of London.

Add to this, I received just at the time when I was most in want of cash, Madame Mantalini's bill, Messrs. Howell & James's ditto, the account of Baron Von Stiltz, and the bill of Mr. Polonius for the setting of the diamond pin. All these bills arrived in a week, as they have a knack of doing; and fancy my astonishment in presenting them to Mrs. Hoggarty, when she said, 'Well, my dear, you are in the receipt of a very fine income. If

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you choose to order dresses and jewels from first-rate shops, you must pay for them; and don't expect that *I* am to abet your extravagances, or give you a shilling more than the munificent sum I pay you for board and lodging!'

How could I tell Mary of this behaviour of Mrs. Hoggarty, and Mary in such a delicate condition? And bad as matters were at home, I am sorry to say at the office they began to look still worse.

Not only did Roundhand leave, but Highmore went away. Abednego became head clerk: and one day old Abednego came to the place and was shown into the directors' private room; when he left it, he came trembling, chattering, and cursing downstairs; and had begun, 'Shentlemen——' a speech to the very clerks in the office, when Mr. Brough, with an imploring look, and crying out, 'Stop till Saturday!' at length got him into the street.

On Saturday Abednego junior left the office for ever, and I became head clerk with £400 a year salary. It was a fatal week for the office, too. On Monday, when I arrived and took my seat at the head desk, and my first read of the newspaper, as was my right, the first thing I read was, 'Frightful fire in Houndsditch! Total destruction of Mr. Meshach's sealing-wax manufactory and of Mr. Shadrach's clothing depôt, adjoining. In the former was £20,000 worth of the finest Dutch wax, which the voracious element attacked and devoured in a twinkling. The latter estimable gentleman had just completed forty thousand suits of clothes for the cavalry of H. H. the Cacique of Poyais.'

Both of these Jewish gents, who were connections of Mr. Abednego, were insured in our office to the full amount of their loss. The calamity was attributed to the drunkenness of a scoundrelly Irish watchman, who was employed on the premises, and who upset a bottle of whisky in the warehouse of Messrs. Shadrach, and

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incautiously looked for the liquor with a lighted candle. The man was brought to our office by his employers; and certainly, as we all could testify, was *even then* in a state of frightful intoxication.

As if this were not sufficient, in the obituary was announced the demise of Alderman Pash—Alderman Cally-Pash we used to call him in our lighter hours, knowing his propensity to green fat: but such a moment as this was no time for joking! He was insured by our house for £5000. And now I saw very well the truth of a remark of Gus's—viz., that life-assurance companies go on excellently for a year or two after their establishment, but that it is much more difficult to make them profitable when the assured parties begin to die.

The Jewish fires were the heaviest blows we had had; for though the Waddingley Cotton-mills had been burnt in 1822, at a loss to the Company of £80,000, and though the patent Erostratus Match Manufactory had exploded in the same year at a charge of £14,000, there were those who said that the loss had not been near so heavy as was supposed—nay, that the Company had burnt the above-named establishments as advertisements for themselves. Of these facts I can't be positive, having never seen the early accounts of the concern.

Contrary to the expectation of all us gents, who were ourselves as dismal as mutes, Mr. Brough came to the office in his coach-and-four, laughing and joking with a friend as he stepped out at the door.

'Gentlemen!' said he, 'you have read the papers; they announce an event which I most deeply deplore. I mean the demise of the excellent Alderman Pash, one of our constituents. But if anything can console me for the loss of that worthy man, it is to think that his children and widow will receive, at eleven o'clock next Saturday, £5000 from my friend Mr. Titmarsh, who is now head clerk here. As for the accident which has happened to Messrs. Shadrach and Meshach,—in *that*, at

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least, there is nothing that can occasion any person sorrow. On Saturday next, or as soon as the particulars of their loss can be satisfactorily ascertained, my friend Mr. Titmarsh will pay to them across the counter a sum of forty, fifty, eighty, one hundred thousand pounds —according to the amount of their loss. *They*, at least, will be remunerated; and though to our proprietors the outlay will no doubt be considerable, yet we can afford it, gentlemen. John Brough can afford it himself, for the matter of that, and not be very much embarrassed; and we must learn to bear ill-fortune as we have hitherto borne good, and show ourselves to be men always!'

Mr. B. concluded with some allusions, which I confess I don't like to give here; for to speak of Heaven in connection with common worldly matters, has always appeared to me irreverent; and to bring it to bear witness to the lie in his mouth, as a religious hypocrite does, is such a frightful crime, that one should be careful even in alluding to it.

Mr. Brough's speech somehow found its way into the newspapers of that very evening; nor can I think who gave a report of it, for none of our gents left the office that day until the evening papers had appeared. But there was the speech—ay, and at the week's end, although Roundhand was heard on 'Change that day declaring he would bet five to one that Alderman Pash's money would never be paid,—at the week's end the money was paid by me to Mrs. Pash's solicitor across the counter, and no doubt Roundhand lost his money.

Shall I tell how the money was procured? There can be no harm in mentioning the matter now after twenty years' lapse of time; and moreover, it is greatly to the credit of two individuals now dead.

As I was head clerk, I had occasion to be frequently in Brough's room, and he now seemed once more disposed to take me into his confidence.

'Titmarsh, my boy,' said he one day to me, after

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looking me hard in the face, 'did you ever hear of the fate of the great Mr. Silberschmidt, of London?' Of course I had. Mr. Silberschmidt, the Rothschild of his day (indeed, I have heard the latter famous gent was originally a clerk in Silberschmidt's house)—Silberschmidt, fancying he could not meet his engagements, committed suicide; and had he lived till four o'clock that day, would have known that he was worth £400,000. 'To tell you frankly the truth,' says Mr. B., 'I am in Silberschmidt's case. My late partner, Hoff, has given bills in the name of the firm to an enormous amount, and I have been obliged to meet them. I have been cast in fourteen actions, brought by creditors of that infernal Ginger Beer Company; and all the debts are put upon my shoulders on account of my known wealth. Now, unless I have time, I cannot pay; and the long and short of the matter is that if I cannot procure £5000 before Saturday, *our concern is ruined!*'

'What! the West Diddlesex ruined?' says I, thinking of my poor mother's annuity. 'Impossible! our business is splendid!'

'We must have £5000 on Saturday, and we are saved; and if you will, as you can, get it for me, I will give you £10,000 for the money!'

B. then showed me to a fraction the accounts of the concern, and his own private account; proving beyond the possibility of a doubt, that with the £5000 our office must be set a-going; and without it, that the concern must stop. No matter how he proved the thing; but there is, you know, a dictum of a statesman that, give him but leave to use figures, and he will prove anything.

I promised to ask Mrs. Hoggarty once more for the money, and she seemed not to be disinclined. I told him so; and that day he called upon her, his wife called upon her, his daughter called upon her, and once more the Brough carriage-and-four was seen at our house.

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But Mrs. Brough was a bad manager; and instead of carrying matters with a high hand, fairly burst into tears before Mrs. Hoggarty, and went down on her knees and besought her to save dear John. This at once aroused my aunt's suspicions: and instead of lending the money, she wrote off to Mr. Smithers instantly to come up to her, desired me to give her up the £3000 scrip shares that I possessed, called me an atrocious cheat and heartless swindler, and vowed I had been the cause of her ruin.

How was Mr. Brough to get the money? I will tell you. Being in his room one day, old Gates the Fulham porter came and brought him, from Mr. Balls, the pawnbroker, a sum of £1200. Missus told him, he said, to carry the plate to Mr. Balls; and having paid the money, old Gates fumbled a great deal in his pockets, and at last pulled out a £5 note, which he said his daughter Jane had just sent him from service, and begged Mr. B. would let him have another share in the Company. 'He was mortal sure it would go right yet. And when he heard master crying and cursing as he and missus were walking in the shrubbery, and saying that for the want of a few pounds—a few shillings—the finest fortune in Europe was to be overthrown, why, Gates and his woman thought that they should come for'ard, to be sure, with all they could, to help the kindest master and missus ever was.'

This was the substance of Gates's speech; and Mr. Brough shook his hand and—took the £5. 'Gates,' said he, 'that £5 note shall be the best outlay you ever made in your life!' and I have no doubt it was,—but it was in heaven that poor old Gates was to get the interest of his little mite.

Nor was this the only instance. Mrs. Brough's sister, Miss Dough, who had been on bad terms with the Director almost ever since he had risen to be a great man, came to the office with a power of attorney, and

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said,'John, Isabella has been with me this morning, and says you want money, and I have brought you my £4000; it is all I have, John, and pray God it may do you good—you and my dear sister, who was the best sister in the world to me—till—till a little time ago.'

And she laid down the paper: I was called up to witness it, and Brough, with tears in his eyes, told me her words; for he could trust me, he said. And thus it was that I came to be present at Gates's interview with his master, which took place only an hour afterwards. Brave Mrs. Brough! how she was working for her husband! Good woman, and kind! but *you* had a true heart, and merited a better fate! Though wherefore say so? The woman, to this day, thinks her husband an angel, and loves him a thousand times better for his misfortunes.

On Saturday, Alderman Pash's solicitor was paid by me across the counter, as I said. 'Never mind your aunt's money, Titmarsh, my boy,' said Brough: 'never mind her having resumed her shares. You are a true honest fellow; you have never abused me like that pack of curs downstairs, and I'll make your fortune yet!'

. . . . . .

The next week, as I was sitting with my wife, with Mr. Smithers, and with Mrs. Hoggarty, taking our tea comfortably, a knock was heard at the door, and a gentleman desired to speak to me in the parlour. It was Mr. Aminadab of Chancery Lane, who arrested me as a shareholder of the Independent West Diddlesex Association, at the suit of Von Stiltz of Clifford Street, tailor and draper.

I called down Smithers, and told him for Heaven's sake not to tell Mary.

'Where is Brough?' says Mr. Smithers.

'Why,' says Mr. Aminadab, 'he's once more of the firm of Brough and Off, sir—he breakfasted at Calais this morning!'

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CHAPTER XI

IN WHICH IT APPEARS THAT A MAN MAY POSSESS A DIAMOND AND YET BE VERY HARD PRESSED FOR A DINNER

On that fatal Saturday evening, in a hackney-coach, fetched from the Foundling, was I taken from my comfortable house and my dear little wife; whom Mr. Smithers was left to console as he might. He said that I was compelled to take a journey upon business connected with the office; and my poor Mary made up a little portmanteau of clothes, and tied a comforter round my neck, and bade my companion particularly to keep the coach windows shut: which injunction the grinning wretch promised to obey. Our journey was not long: it was only a shilling fare to Cursitor Street, Chancery Lane, and there I was set down.

The house before which the coach stopped seemed to be only one of half-a-dozen in that street which were used for the same purpose. No man, be he ever so rich, can pass by those dismal houses, I think, without a shudder. The front windows are barred, and on the dingy pillar of the door was a shining brass-plate, setting forth that 'Aminadab, Officer to the Sheriff of Middlesex,' lived therein. A little red-haired Israelite opened the first door as our coach drove up, and received me and my baggage.

As soon as we entered the door, he barred it, and I found myself in the face of another huge door, which was strongly locked; and, at last, passing through that, we entered the lobby of the house.

There is no need to describe it. It is very like ten thousand other houses in our dark City of London. There was a dirty passage and a dirty stair, and from

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the passage two dirty doors let into two filthy rooms, which had strong bars at the windows, and yet withal an air of horrible finery that makes me uncomfortable to think of even yet. On the walls hung all sorts of trumpery pictures in tawdry frames (how different from those capital performances of my cousin Michael Angelo !); on the mantelpiece huge French clocks, vases, and candlesticks; on the sideboards, enormous trays of Birmingham plated ware: for Mr. Aminadab not only arrested those who could not pay money, but lent it to those who could; and had already, in the way of trade, sold and bought these articles many times over.

I agreed to take the back-parlour for the night, and while a Hebrew damsel was arranging a little dusky sofa-bedstead (woe betide him who has to sleep on it !) I was invited into the front parlour, where Mr. Aminadab, bidding me take heart, told me I should have a dinner for nothing with a party who had just arrived. I did not want for dinner, but I was glad not to be alone—not alone, even till Gus came; for whom I despatched a messenger to his lodgings hard by.

I found there, in the front parlour, at eight o'clock in the evening, four gentlemen, just about to sit down to dinner. Surprising ! there was Mr. B., a gentleman of fashion, who had only within half-an-hour arrived in a post-chaise with his companion, Mr. Lock, an officer of Horsham Gaol. Mr. B. was arrested in this wise :—He was a careless good-humoured gentleman, and had indorsed bills to a large amount for a friend; who, a man of high family and unquestionable honour, had pledged the latter, along with a number of the most solemn oaths, for the payment of the bills in question. Having indorsed the notes, young Mr. B., with a proper thoughtlessness, forgot all about them, and so, by some chance, did the friend whom he obliged; for instead of being in London with the money for the payment of his

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obligations, this latter gentleman was travelling abroad, and never hinted one word to Mr. B. that the notes would fall upon him. The young gentleman was at Brighton lying sick of a fever; was taken from his bed by a bailiff, and carried, on a rainy day, to Horsham Gaol; had a relapse of his complaint, and when sufficiently recovered, was brought up to London to the house of Mr. Aminadab; where I found him—a pale, thin, good-humoured, *lost* young man: he was lying on a sofa, and had given orders for the dinner to which I was invited. The lad's face gave one pain to look at; it was impossible not to see that his hours were numbered.

Now Mr. B. has not anything to do with my humble story; but I can't help mentioning him, as I saw him. He sent for his lawyer and his doctor; the former settled speedily his accounts with the bailiff, and the latter arranged all his earthly accounts: for after he went from the spunging-house he never recovered from the shock of the arrest, and in a few weeks he *died*. And though this circumstance took place many years ago, I can't forget it to my dying day; and often see the author of Mr. B.'s death,—a prosperous gentleman, riding a fine horse in the Park, lounging at the window of a club; with many friends, no doubt, and a good reputation. I wonder whether the man sleeps easily and eats with a good appetite? I wonder whether he has paid Mr. B.'s heirs the sum which that gentleman paid and *died for?*

If Mr. B.'s history has nothing to do with mine, and is only inserted here for the sake of a moral, what business have I to mention particulars of the dinner to which I was treated by that gentleman, in the spunging-house in Cursitor Street? Why, for the moral too; and therefore the public must be told of what really and truly that dinner consisted.

There were five guests, and three silver tureens of soup: viz., mock-turtle soup, ox-tail soup, and giblet

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soup. Next came a great piece of salmon, likewise on a silver dish, a roast goose, a roast saddle of mutton, roast game, and all sorts of adjuncts. In this way can a gentleman live in a spunging-house if he be inclined; and over this repast (which, in truth, I could not touch, for, let alone having dined, my heart was full of care)—over this meal my friend Gus Hoskins found me, when he received the letter that I had despatched to him.

Gus, who had never been in a prison before, and whose heart failed him as the red-headed young Moses opened and shut for him the numerous iron outer doors, was struck dumb to see me behind a bottle of claret, in a room blazing with gilt lamps; the curtains were down too, and you could not see the bars at the windows; and Mr. B., Mr. Lock the Brighton officer, Mr Aminadab, and another rich gentleman of his trade and religious persuasion, were chirping as merrily, and looked as respectably, as any noblemen in the land.

'Have him in,' said Mr. B., 'if he's a friend of Mr. Titmarsh's; for, cuss me, I like to see a rogue: and run me through, Titmarsh, but I think you are one of the best in London. You beat Brough; you do, by Jove! for he looks like a rogue—anybody would swear to him! but you! by Jove, you look the very picture of honesty!'

'A deep file,' said Aminadab, winking and pointing me out to his friend Mr. Jehoshaphat.

'A good one,' says Jehoshaphat.

'In for three hundred thousand pound,' says Aminadab: 'Brough's right-hand man, and only three-and-twenty.'

'Mr. Titmarsh, sir, your 'ealth, sir,' says Mr. Lock, in an ecstasy of admiration. 'Your very good 'ealth, sir, and better luck to you next time.'

'Pooh, pooh! *he's* all right,' says Aminadab; 'let *him* alone.'

'In for *what?*' shouted I, quite amazed. 'Why, sir, you arrested me for £90.'

'Yes, but you are in for half-a-million,—you know

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you are. *Them* debts I don't count—them paltry tradesmen's accounts. I mean Brough's business. It's an ugly one: but you'll get through it. We all know you; and I lay my life that when you come through the court, Mrs. Titmarsh has got a handsome thing laid by.'

'Mrs. Titmarsh has a small property, sir,' says I. 'What then?'

The three gentlemen burst into a loud laugh, said I was a 'rum chap'—a 'downy cove,' and made other remarks which I could not understand then; but the meaning of which I have since comprehended, for they took me to be a great rascal, I am sorry to say, and supposed that I had robbed the I. W. D. Association, and, in order to make my money secure, settled it on my wife.

It was in the midst of this conversation that, as I said, Gus came in; and whew! when he saw what was going on, he gave *such* a whistle!

'Herr von Joel, by Jove!' says Aminadab. At which all laughed.

'Sit down,' says Mr. B.,—'sit down, and wet your whistle, my piper! I say, egad! you're the piper that played before Moses! Had you there, Dab. Dab, get a fresh bottle of Burgundy for Mr. Hoskins.' And before he knew where he was, there was Gus for the first time in his life drinking Clos-Vougeot. Gus said he had never tasted Bergamy before, at which the bailiff sneered, and told him the name of the wine.

'*Old Clo!* What?' says Gus; and we laughed: but the Hebrew gents did not this time.

'Come, come, sir!' says Mr. Aminadab's friend, 've're all shentlemen here, and shentlemen never makish reflexunsh upon other gentlemen'sh per-shuashunsh.'

After this feast was concluded, Gus and I retired to my room to consult about my affairs. With regard to

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the responsibility incurred as a shareholder in the West Diddlesex, I was not uneasy; for though the matter might cause me a little trouble at first, I knew I was not a shareholder; that the shares were scrip shares, making the dividend payable to the bearer; and my aunt had called back her shares, and consequently I was free. But it was very unpleasant to me to consider that I was in debt nearly a hundred pounds to tradesmen, chiefly of Mrs. Hoggarty's recommendation; and as she had promised to be answerable for their bills, I determined to send her a letter reminding her of her promise, and begging her at the same time to relieve me from Mr. Von Stiltz's debt, for which I was arrested: and which was incurred not certainly at her desire, but at Mr. Brough's; and would never have been incurred by me but at the absolute demand of that gentleman.

I wrote to her, therefore, begging her to pay all these debts, and promised myself on Monday morning again to be with my dear wife. Gus carried off the letter, and promised to deliver it in Bernard Street after church time; taking care that Mary should know nothing at all of the painful situation in which I was placed. It was near midnight when we parted, and I tried to sleep as well as I could in the dirty little sofa-bedstead of Mr. Aminadab's back-parlour.

That morning was fine and sunshiny, and I heard all the bells ringing cheerfully for church, and longed to be walking to the Foundling with my wife: but there were the three iron doors between me and liberty, and I had nothing for it but to read my prayers in my own room, and walk up and down afterwards in the court at the back of the house. Would you believe it? This very court was like a cage! Great iron bars covered it in from one end to another; and here it was that Mr. Aminadab's gaol-birds took the air.

They had seen me reading out of the prayer-book at the back-parlour window, and all burst into a yell of

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laughter when I came to walk in the cage. One of them shouted out 'Amen!' when I appeared; another called me a muff (which means, in the slang language, a very silly fellow); a third wondered that I took to my prayer-book *yet*.

'When do you mean, sir?' says I to the fellow—a rough man, a horse-dealer.

'Why, when you are going *to be hanged*, you young hypocrite!' says the man. 'But that is always the way with Brough's people,' continued he. 'I had four greys once for him—a great bargain, but he would not go to look at them at Tattersall's, nor speak a word of business about them, because it was a Sunday.'

'Because there are hypocrites, sir,' says I, 'religion is not to be considered a bad thing; and if Mr. Brough would not deal with you on a Sunday, he certainly did his duty.'

The men only laughed the more at this rebuke, and evidently considered me a great criminal. I was glad to be released from their society by the appearance of Gus and Mr. Smithers. Both wore very long faces. They were ushered into my room, and, without any orders of mine, a bottle of wine and biscuits were brought in by Mr. Aminadab; which I really thought was very kind of him.

'Drink a glass of wine, Mr. Titmarsh,' says Smithers, 'and read this letter. A pretty note was that which you sent to your aunt this morning, and here you have an answer to it.'

I drank the wine, and trembled rather as I read as follows:—

'Sir,—If, because you knew I had desined to leave you my proparty, you wished to murdar me, and so stepp into it, you are dissapointed. Your *villiany* and *ingratitude would* have murdard me, had I not, by Heaven's grace, been inabled to look for consalation *elsewhere*.

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'For nearly a year I have been a *martar* to you. I gave up everything,—my happy home in the country, where all respected the name of Hoggarty; my valuble furnitur and wines; my plate, glass, and crockry; I brought all—all to make your home happy and rispectable. I put up with the *airs and impertanencies* of Mrs. Titmarsh; I loaded her and you with presents and bennafits. I sacrafised myself; I gave up the best sociaty in the land, to witch I have been accustomed, in order to be a gardian and compannion to you, and prevent, if possible, that *waist and ixtravygance* which I *prophycied* would be your ruin. Such waist and ixtravygance never, never, never did I see. Buttar waisted as if had been dirt, coles flung away, candles burnt *at both ends*, tea and meat the same. The butcher's bill in this house was enough to support six famalies.

'And now you have the audassaty, being placed in prison justly for your crimes,—for cheating me of £3000, for robbing your mother of an insignificient summ, which to her, poor thing, was everything (though she will not feel her loss as I do, being all her life next door to a beggar), for incurring detts which you cannot pay, wherein you knew that your miserable income was quite unable to support your ixtravygance—you come upon me to pay your detts! No, sir, it is quite enough that your mother should go on the parish, and that your wife should sweep the streets, to which you have indeed brought them; *I*, at least, though cheated by you of a large summ, and obliged to pass my days in comparitive ruin, can retire, and have some of the comforts to which my rank entitles me. The furnitur in this house is mine; and as I presume you intend *your lady* to sleep in the streets, I give you warning that I shall remove it all to-morrow.

'Mr. Smithers will tell you that I had intended to leave you my intire fortune. I have this morning, in his presents, solamly toar up my will; and hereby renounce all connection with you and your beggarly family. SUSAN HOGGARTY.

'*P. S.*—I took a viper into my bosom, *and it stung me.*'

I confess that, on the first reading of this letter, I was

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in such a fury that I forgot almost the painful situation in which it plunged me, and the ruin hanging over me.

'What a fool you were, Titmarsh, to write that letter!' said Mr. Smithers. 'You have cut your own throat, sir,—lost a fine property,—written yourself out of five hundred a year. Mrs. Hoggarty, my client, brought the will, as she says, downstairs, and flung it into the fire before our faces.'

'It's a blessing that your wife was from home,' added Gus. 'She went to church this morning with Dr. Salts' family, and sent word that she would spend the day with them. She was always glad to be away from Mrs. H., you know.'

'She never knew on which side her bread was buttered,' said Mr. Smithers. 'You should have taken the lady when she was in the humour, sir, and have borrowed the money elsewhere. Why, sir, I had almost reconciled her to her loss in that cursed Company. I showed her how I had saved out of Brough's claws the whole of her remaining fortune; which he would have devoured in a day, the scoundrel! And if you would have left the matter to me, Mr. Titmarsh, I would have had you reconciled completely to Mrs. Hoggarty; I would have removed all your difficulties; I would have lent you the pitiful sum of money myself.'

'Will you?' says Gus; 'that's a trump!' and he seized Smithers's hand, and squeezed it so that the tears came into the attorney's eyes.

'Generous fellow!' said I; 'lend me money, when you know what a situation I am in, and not able to pay!'

'Ay, my good sir, there's the rub!' says Mr. Smithers. 'I said I *would* have lent the money; and so to the acknowledged heir of Mrs. Hoggarty I would—would at this moment; for nothing delights the heart of Bob Smithers more than to do a kindness. I would have rejoiced in doing it; and a mere acknowledgment from

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that respected lady would have amply sufficed. But now, sir, the case is altered,—you have no security to offer as you justly observe.'

'Not a whit, certainly.'

'And without security, sir, of course you can expect no money—of course not. You are a man of the world, Mr. Titmarsh, and I see our notions exactly agree.'

'There's his wife's property,' says Gus.

'Wife's property? Bah! Mrs. Sam Titmarsh is a minor, and can't touch a shilling of it. No, no, no meddling with minors for me! But stop!—your mother has a house and shop in our village. Get me a mortgage of that——'

'I'll do no such thing, sir,' says I. 'My mother has suffered quite enough on my score already, and has my sisters to provide for; and I will thank you, Mr. Smithers, not to breathe a syllable to her regarding my present situation.'

'You speak like a man of honour, sir,' says Mr. Smithers, 'and I will obey your injunctions to the letter. I will do more, sir. I will introduce you to a respectable firm here, my worthy friends, Messrs. Higgs, Biggs & Blatherwick, who will do everything in their power to serve you. And so, sir, I wish you a very good morning.'

And with this Mr. Smithers took his hat and left the room; and after a further consultation with my aunt, as I heard afterwards, quitted London that evening by the mail.

I sent my faithful Gus off once more to break the matter gently to my wife, fearing lest Mrs. Hoggarty should speak of it abruptly to her; as I knew in her anger she would do. But he came in an hour panting back, to say that Mrs. H. had packed and locked her trunks, and had gone off in a hackney-coach. So, knowing that my poor Mary was not to return till night, Hoskins remained with me till then; and, after

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a dismal day, left me once more at nine, to carry the dismal tidings to her.

At ten o'clock on that night there was a great rattling and ringing at the outer door, and presently my poor girl fell into my arms; and Gus Hoskins sat blubbering in a corner, as I tried my best to console her.

. . . . . .

The next morning I was favoured with a visit from Mr. Blatherwick; who, hearing from me that I had only three guineas in my pocket, told me very plainly that lawyers only lived by fees. He recommended me to quit Cursitor Street, as living there was very expensive. And as I was sitting very sad, my wife made her appearance (it was with great difficulty that she could be brought to leave me the night previous)—

'The horrible men came at four this morning,' said she; 'four hours before light.'

'What horrible men?' says I.

'Your aunt's men,' said she, 'to remove the furniture; they had it all packed before I came away. And I let them carry all,' said she; 'I was too sad to look what was ours and what was not. That odious Mr. Wapshot was with them; and I left him seeing the last waggon-load from the door. I have only brought away your clothes,' added she, 'and a few of mine; and some of the books you used to like to read: and some—some things I have been getting for the—for the baby. The servants' wages were paid up to Christmas; and I paid them the rest. And see! just as I was going away, the post came, and brought to me my half-year's income—£35, dear Sam. Isn't it a blessing?'

'Will you pay my bill, Mr. What-d'ye-call-'im?' here cried Mr. Aminadab, flinging open the door (he had been consulting with Mr. Blatherwick, I suppose). 'I want the room for *a gentleman*. I guess it's too dear for the like of you.' And here—will you believe it?—the man

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handed me a bill of three guineas for two days' board and lodging in his odious house.

. . . . . .

There was a crowd of idlers round the door as I passed out of it, and had I been alone I should have been ashamed of seeing them; but, as it was, I was only thinking of my dear dear wife, who was leaning trustfully on my arm, and smiling like heaven into my face—ay, and *took* heaven, too, into the Fleet Prison with me—or an angel out of heaven. Ah! I had loved her before, and happy it is to love when one is hopeful and young in the midst of smiles and sunshine; but be *un*happy, and then see what it is to be loved by a good woman! I declare before Heaven, that of all the joys and happy moments it has given me, that was the crowning one—that little ride, with my wife's cheek on my shoulder, down Holborn to the prison! Do you think I cared for the bailiff that sat opposite? No, by the Lord! I kissed her, and hugged her—yes, and cried with her likewise. But before our ride was over her eyes dried up, and she stepped blushing and happy out of the coach at the prison door, as if she were a princess going to the Queen's Drawing-room.

CHAPTER XII

IN WHICH THE HERO'S AUNT'S DIAMOND MAKES ACQUAINTANCE WITH THE HERO'S UNCLE

THE failure of the great Diddlesex Association speedily became the theme of all the newspapers, and every person concerned in it was soon held up to public abhorrence as a rascal and a swindler. It was said that Brough had gone off with a million of money. Even it was hinted that poor I had sent a hundred thousand pounds to America, and only waited to pass through the court in

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order to be a rich man for the rest of my days. This opinion had some supporters in the prison; where, strange to say, it procured me consideration—of which, as may be supposed, I was little inclined to avail myself. Mr. Aminadab, however, in his frequent visits to the Fleet, persisted in saying that I was a poor-spirited creature, a mere tool in Brough's hands, and had not saved a shilling. Opinions, however, differed; and I believe it was considered by the turnkeys that I was a fellow of exquisite dissimulation, who had put on the appearance of poverty in order more effectually to mislead the public.

Messrs. Abednego and Son were similarly held up to public odium: and, in fact, what were the exact dealings of these gentlemen with Mr. Brough I have never been able to learn. It was proved by the books that large sums of money had been paid to Mr. Abednego by the Company; but he produced documents signed by Mr. Brough, which made the latter and the West Diddlesex Association his debtors to a still further amount. On the day I went to the Bankruptcy Court to be examined, Mr. Abednego and the two gentlemen from Houndsditch were present to swear to their debts, and made a sad noise, and uttered a vast number of oaths in attestation of their claim. But Messrs. Jackson & Paxton produced against them that very Irish porter who was said to have been the cause of the fire, and, I am told, hinted that they had matter for hanging the Jewish gents if they persisted in their demand. On this they disappeared altogether, and no more was ever heard of their losses. I am inclined to believe that our Director had had money from Abednego—had given him shares as bonus and security—had been suddenly obliged to redeem these shares with ready money; and so had precipitated the ruin of himself and the concern. It is needless to say here in what a multiplicity of companies Brough was engaged. That in which poor Mr. Tidd in-

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vested his money did not pay 2d. in the pound; and that was the largest dividend paid by any of them.

As for ours—ah! there was a pretty scene as I was brought from the Fleet to the Bankruptcy Court, to give my testimony as late head clerk and accountant of the West Diddlesex Association.

My poor wife, then very near her time, insisted upon accompanying me to Basinghall Street; and so did my friend Gus Hoskins, that true and honest fellow. If you had seen the crowd that was assembled, and the hubbub that was made as I was brought up!

'Mr. Titmarsh,' says the Commissioner as I came to the table, with a peculiar sarcastic accent on the Tit—'Mr. Titmarsh, you were the confidant of Mr. Brough, the principal clerk of Mr. Brough, and a considerable shareholder in the Company?'

'Only a nominal one, sir,' said I.

'Of course, only nominal,' continued the Commissioner, turning to his colleague with a sneer; 'and a great comfort it must be to you, sir, to think that you had a share in all the plun—the profits of the speculation, and now can free yourself from the losses, by saying you are only a nominal shareholder.'

'The infernal villain!' shouted out a voice from the crowd. It was that of the furious half-pay captain and late shareholder, Captain Sparr.

'Silence in the court there!' the Commissioner continued: and all this while Mary was anxiously looking in his face, and then in mine, as pale as death; while Gus, on the contrary, was as red as vermilion. 'Mr. Titmarsh, I have had the good fortune to see a list of your debts from the insolvent court, and find that you are indebted to Mr. Stiltz, the great tailor, in a handsome sum; to Mr. Polonius, the celebrated jeweller, likewise; to fashionable milliners and dressmakers, moreover;—and all this upon a salary of £200 per annum. For so

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young a gentleman it must be confessed you have employed your time well.'

'Has this anything to do with the question, sir?' says I. 'Am I here to give an account of my private debts, or to speak as to what I know regarding the affairs of the Company. As for my share in it, I have a mother, sir, and many sisters——'

'The d——d scoundrel!' shouts the Captain.

'Silence that there fellow!' shouts Gus, as bold as brass; at which the court burst out laughing, and this gave me courage to proceed.

'My mother, sir, four years since, having a legacy of £400 left to her, advised with her solicitor, Mr. Smithers, how she should dispose of this sum; and as the Independent West Diddlesex was just then established, the money was placed in an annuity in that office, where I procured a clerkship. You may suppose me a very hardened criminal, because I have ordered clothes of Mr. Von Stiltz; but you will hardly fancy that I, a lad of nineteen, knew anything of the concerns of the Company into whose service I entered as twentieth clerk, my own mother's money paying, as it were, for my place. Well, sir, the interest offered by the Company was so tempting, that a rich relative of mine was induced to purchase a number of shares.'

'*Who* induced your relative, if I may make so bold as to inquire?'

'I can't help owning, sir,' says I, blushing, 'that I wrote a letter myself. But consider, my relative was sixty years old, and I was twenty-one. My relative took several months to consider, and had the advice of her lawyers before she acceded to my request. And I made it at the instigation of Mr. Brough, who dictated the letter which I wrote, and who I really thought then was as rich as Mr. Rothschild himself.'

'Your friend placed her money in your name; and you, if I mistake not, Mr. Titmarsh, were suddenly

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placed over the heads of twelve of your fellow-clerks as a reward for your service in obtaining it?'

'It is very true, sir,'—and, as I confessed it, poor Mary began to wipe her eyes, and Gus's ears (I could not see his face) looked like two red-hot muffins—'it's quite true, sir; and, as matters have turned out, I am heartily sorry for what I did. But at the time I thought I could serve my aunt as well as myself; and you must remember, then, how high our shares were.'

'Well, sir, having procured this sum of money, you were straightway taken into Mr. Brough's confidence. You were received into his house, and from third clerk speedily became head clerk; in which post you were found at the disappearance of your worthy patron!'

'Sir, you have no right to question me, to be sure; but here are a hundred of our shareholders, and I'm not unwilling to make a clean breast of it,' said I, pressing Mary's hand. 'I certainly *was* the head clerk. And why? Because the other gents left the office. I certainly was received into Mr. Brough's house. And why? Because, sir, *my aunt had more money to lay out*. I see it all clearly now, though I could not understand it then; and the proof that Mr. Brough wanted my aunt's money, and not me, is that, when she came to town, our Director carried her by force out of my house to Fulham, and never so much as thought of asking me or my wife thither. Ay, sir, and he would have had her remaining money, had not her lawyer from the country prevented her disposing of it. Before the concern finally broke, and as soon as she heard there was doubt concerning it, she took back her shares—scrip shares they were, sir, as you know—and has disposed of them as she thought fit. Here, sir, and gents,' says I, 'you have the whole of the history as far as regards me. In order to get her only son a means of livelihood, my mother placed her little money with the Company—it is lost. My aunt invested larger sums with it, which were to have

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been mine one day, and they are lost too; and here am I, at the end of four years, a disgraced and ruined man. Is there any one present, however much he has suffered by the failure of the Company, that has had worse fortune through it than I?'

'Mr. Titmarsh,' says Mr. Commissioner, in a much more friendly way, and at the same time casting a glance at a newspaper reporter that was sitting hard by, 'your story is not likely to get into the newspapers; for, as you say, it is a private affair, which you had no need to speak of unless you thought proper, and may be considered as a confidential conversation between us and the other gentlemen here. But, if it *could* be made public, it might do some good, and warn people, if they *will* be warned, against the folly of such enterprises as that in which you have been engaged. It is quite clear from your story, that you have been deceived as grossly as any one of the persons present. But look you, sir, if you had not been so eager after gain, I think you would not have allowed yourself to be deceived, and would have kept your relative's money, and inherited it, according to your story, one day or other. Directly people expect to make a large interest, their judgment seems to desert them; and because they wish for profit, they think they are sure of it, and disregard all warnings and all prudence. Besides the hundreds of honest families who have been ruined by merely placing confidence in this Association of yours, and who deserve the heartiest pity, there are hundreds more who have embarked in it, like yourself, not for investment, but for speculation; and these, upon my word, deserve the fate they have met with. As long as dividends are paid, no questions are asked; and Mr. Brough might have taken the money for his shareholders on the high-road, and they would have pocketed it, and not been too curious. But what's the use of talking?' says Mr. Commissioner, in a passion: 'here is one rogue detected, and a thousand

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dupes made; and if another swindler starts to-morrow, there will be a thousand more of his victims round this table a year hence; and so, I suppose, to the end. And now let's go to business, gentlemen, and excuse this sermon.'

After giving an account of all I knew, which was very little, other gents who were employed in the concern were examined; and I went back to prison, with my poor little wife on my arm. We had to pass through the crowd in the rooms, and my heart bled as I saw, amongst a score of others, poor Gates, Brough's porter, who had advanced every shilling to his master, and was now, with ten children, houseless and penniless in his old age. Captain Sparr was in this neighbourhood, but by no means so friendly disposed; for while Gates touched his hat, as if I had been a lord, the little Captain came forward threatening with his bamboo-cane and swearing with great oaths that I was an accomplice of Brough. 'Curse you for a smooth-faced scoundrel!' says he. 'What business have you to ruin an English gentleman, as you have me?' And again he advanced with his stick. But this time, officer as he was, Gus took him by the collar, and shoved him back, and said, 'Look at the lady, you brute, and hold your tongue!' And when he looked at my wife's situation, Captain Sparr became redder for shame than he had before been for anger. 'I'm sorry she's married to such a good-for-nothing,' muttered he, and fell back; and my poor wife and I walked out of the court, and back to our dismal room in the prison.

It was a hard place for a gentle creature like her to be confined in; and I longed to have some of my relatives with her when her time should come. But her grandmother could not leave the old lieutenant; and my mother had written to say, that, as Mrs. Hoggarty was with us, she was quite as well at home with her children. 'What a blessing it is for you, under your misfortunes,'

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continued the good soul, 'to have the generous purse of your aunt for succour!' Generous purse of my aunt, indeed! Where could Mrs. Hoggarty be? It was evident that she had not written to any of her friends in the country, nor gone thither, as she threatened.

But as my mother had already lost so much money through my unfortunate luck, and as she had enough to do with her little pittance to keep my sisters at home; and as, on hearing of my condition, she would infallibly have sold her last gown to bring me aid, Mary and I agreed that we would not let her know what our real condition was—bad enough! Heaven knows, and sad and cheerless. Old Lieutenant Smith had likewise nothing but his half-pay and his rheumatism; so we were, in fact, quite friendless.

That period of my life, and that horrible prison, seem to me like recollections of some fever. What an awful place!—not for the sadness, strangely enough, as I thought, but for the gaiety of it; for the long prison galleries were, I remember, full of life and a sort of grave bustle. All day and all night doors were clapping to and fro; and you heard loud voices, oaths, footsteps, and laughter. Next door to our room was one where a man sold gin under the name of *tape;* and here, from morning till night, the people kept up a horrible revelry;—and sang—sad songs some of them: but my dear little girl was, thank God! unable to understand the most part of their ribaldry. She never used to go out till nightfall; and all day she sat working at a little store of caps and dresses for the expected stranger—and not, she says to this day, unhappy. But the confinement sickened her, who had been used to happy country air, and she grew daily paler and paler.

The Fives Court was opposite our window; and here I used, very unwillingly at first, but afterwards, I do confess, with much eagerness, to take a couple of hours' daily sport. Ah! it was a strange place. There was

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an aristocracy there as elsewhere,—amongst other gents, a son of my Lord Deuceace; and many of the men in the prison were as eager to walk with him, and talked of his family as knowingly, as if they were Bond Street bucks. Poor Tidd, especially, was one of these. Of all his fortune he had nothing left but a dressing-case and a flowered dressing-gown; and to these possessions he added a fine pair of moustaches, with which the poor creature strutted about; and though cursing his ill-fortune, was, I do believe, as happy whenever his friends brought him a guinea, as he had been during his brief career as a gentleman on town. I have seen sauntering dandies in watering-places ogling the women, watching eagerly for steam-boats and stage-coaches as if their lives depended upon them, and strutting all day in jackets up and down the public walks. Well, there are such fellows in prison: quite as dandified and foolish, only a little more shabby—dandies with dirty beards and holes at their elbows.

I did not go near what is called the poor side of the prison—I *dared* not, that was the fact. But our little stock of money was running low; and my heart sickened to think what might be my dear wife's fate, and on what sort of a couch our child might be born. But Heaven spared me that pang,—Heaven, and my dear good friend, Gus Hoskins.

The attorneys to whom Mr. Smithers recommended me, told me that I could get leave to live in the Rules of the Fleet, could I procure sureties to the marshal of the prison for the amount of the detainer lodged against me; but though I looked Mr. Blatherwick hard in the face, he never offered to give the bail for me, and I knew no housekeeper in London who would procure it. There was, however, one whom I did not know,—and that was old Mr. Hoskins, the leatherseller of Skinner Street, a kind fat gentleman, who brought his fat wife to see Mrs. Titmarsh; and though the lady gave herself rather

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patronising airs (her husband being free of the Skinners' Company, and bidding fair to be Alderman, nay, Lord Mayor of the first city in the world), she seemed heartily to sympathise with us; and her husband stirred and bustled about until the requisite leave was obtained, and I was allowed comparative liberty.

As for lodgings, they were soon had. My old landlady, Mrs. Stokes, sent her Jemima to say that her first floor was at our service; and when we had taken possession of it, and I offered at the end of the week to pay her bill, the good soul, with tears in her eyes, told me that she did not want for money now, and that she knew I had enough to do with what I had. I did not refuse her kindness; for, indeed, I had but five guineas left, and ought not by rights to have thought of such expensive apartments as hers; but my wife's time was very near, and I could not bear to think that she should want for any comfort in her lying-in.

That admirable woman, with whom the Misses Hoskins came every day to keep company—and very nice, kind ladies they are—recovered her health a good deal, now she was out of the odious prison and was enabled to take exercise. How gaily did we pace up and down Bridge Street and Chatham Place, to be sure! and yet, in truth, I was a beggar, and felt sometimes ashamed of being so happy.

With regard to the liabilities of the Company my mind was now made quite easy; for the creditors could only come upon our directors, and these it was rather difficult to find. Mr. Brough was across the water; and I must say, to the credit of that gentleman, that while everybody thought he had run away with hundreds of thousands of pounds, he was in a garret at Boulogne, with scarce a shilling in his pocket, and his fortune to make afresh. Mrs. Brough, like a good brave woman, remained faithful to him, and only left Fulham with the gown on her back; and Miss Belinda, though grumbling

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and sadly out of temper, was no better off. For the other directors,—when they came to inquire at Edinburgh for Mr. Mull, W.S., it appeared there *was* a gentleman of that name who had practised in Edinburgh with good reputation until 1800, since when he had retired to the Isle of Skye: and on being applied to knew no more of the West Diddlesex Association than Queen Anne did. General Sir Dionysius O'Halloran had abruptly quitted Dublin, and returned to the republic of Guatemala. Mr. Shirk went into the *Gazette*. Mr. Macraw, M.P. and King's Counsel, had not a single guinea in the world but what he received for attending our board; and the only man seizable was Mr. Manstraw, a wealthy navy contractor, as we understood, at Chatham. He turned out to be a small dealer in marine stores, and his whole stock in trade was not worth £10. Mr. Abednego was the other director, and we have already seen what became of *him*.

'Why, as there is no danger from the West Diddlesex,' suggested Mr. Hoskins, senior, 'should you not now endeavour to make an arrangement with your creditors; and who can make a better bargain with them than pretty Mrs. Titmarsh here, whose sweet eyes would soften the hardest-hearted tailor or milliner that ever lived?'

Accordingly my dear girl, one bright day in February, shook me by the hand, and bidding me be of good cheer, set forth with Gus in a coach, to pay a visit to those persons. Little did I think a year before, that the daughter of the gallant Smith should ever be compelled to be a suppliant to tailors and haberdashers; but *she*, Heaven bless her! felt none of the shame which oppressed me—or *said* she felt none—and went away, nothing doubting, on her errand.

In the evening she came back, and my heart thumped to know the news. I saw it was bad by her face. For some time she did not speak, but looked as pale as death,

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and wept as she kissed me. 'You speak, Mr. Augustus,' at last said she, sobbing; and so Gus told me the circumstances of that dismal day.

'What do you think, Sam?' says he; 'that infernal aunt of yours, at whose command you had the things, has written to the tradesmen to say that you are a swindler and impostor; that you give out that *she* ordered the goods; that she is ready to drop down dead, and to take her Bible oath that she never did any such thing, and that they must look to you alone for payment. Not one of them would hear of letting you out; and as for Mantalini, the scoundrel was so insolent that I gave him a box on the ear, and would have half-killed him, only poor Mary—Mrs. Titmarsh I mean—screamed and fainted: and I brought her away, and here she is, as ill as can be.'

That night, the indefatigable Gus was obliged to run post-haste for Dr. Salts, and next morning a little boy was born. I did not know whether to be sad or happy, as they showed me the little weakly thing; but Mary was the happiest woman, she declared, in the world, and forgot all her sorrows in nursing the poor baby; she went bravely through her time, and vowed that it was the loveliest child in the world; and that though Lady Tiptoff, whose confinement we read of as having taken place the same day, might have a silk bed and a fine house in Grosvenor Square, she never never could have such a beautiful child as our dear little Gus: for after whom should we have named the boy if not after our good kind friend? We had a little party at the christening, and I assure you were very merry over our tea.

The mother, thank Heaven! was very well, and it did one's heart good to see her in that attitude in which I think every woman, be she ever so plain, looks beautiful—with her baby at her bosom. The child was sickly, but she did not see it; we were very poor, but what cared she? She had no leisure to be sorrowful as I was:

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I had my last guinea now in my pocket; and when *that* was gone—ah! my heart sickened to think of what was to come, and I prayed for strength and guidance, and in the midst of my perplexities felt yet thankful that the danger of the confinement was over; and that for the worst fortune which was to befall us, my dear wife was at least prepared, and strong in health.

I told Mrs. Stokes that she must let us have a cheaper room—a garret that should cost but a few shillings; and though the good woman bade me remain in the apartments we occupied, yet, now that my wife was well, I felt it would be a crime to deprive my kind landlady of her chief means of livelihood; and at length she promised to get me a garret as I wanted, and to make it as comfortable as might be; and little Jemima declared that she would be glad beyond measure to wait on the mother and the child.

The room, then, was made ready; and though I took some pains not to speak of the arrangement too suddenly to Mary, yet there was no need of disguise or hesitation; for when at last I told her—'Is that all?' said she, and took my hand with one of her blessed smiles, and vowed that she and Jemima would keep the room as pretty and neat as possible. 'And I will cook your dinners,' added she; 'for you know you said I make the best roly-poly puddings in the world.' God bless her! I do think some women almost love poverty: but I did not tell Mary how poor I was, nor had she any idea how lawyers', and prison's, and doctors' fees had diminished the sum of money which she brought me when we came to the Fleet.

It was not, however, destined that she and her child should inhabit that little garret. We were to leave our lodgings on Monday morning; but on Saturday evening the child was seized with convulsions, and all Sunday the mother watched and prayed for it: but it pleased God to take the innocent infant from us, and on Sunday, at

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midnight, it lay a corpse in its mother's bosom. Amen. We have other children, happy and well, now round about us, and from the father's heart the memory of this little thing has almost faded; but I do believe that every day of her life the mother thinks of the firstborn that was with her for so short a while: many and many a time has she taken her daughters to the grave, in Saint Bride's, where he lies buried; and she wears still at her neck a little little lock of gold hair, which she took from the head of the infant as he lay smiling in his coffin. It has happened to me to forget the child's birthday, but to her never; and often in the midst of common talk comes something that shows she is thinking of the child still,—some simple allusion that is to me inexpressibly affecting.

I shall not try to describe her grief, for such things are sacred and secret; and a man has no business to place them on paper for all the world to read. Nor should I have mentioned the child's loss at all, but that even that loss was the means of a great worldly blessing to us; as my wife has often with tears and thanks acknowledged.

While my wife was weeping over her child, I am ashamed to say I was distracted with other feelings besides those of grief for its loss; and I have often since thought what a master—nay, destroyer—of the affections want is, and have learned from experience to be thankful for *daily bread*. That acknowledgment of weakness which we make in imploring to be relieved from hunger and from temptation, is surely wisely put in our daily prayer. Think of it you who are rich, and take heed how you turn a beggar away.

The child lay there in its wicker cradle, with its sweet fixed smile in its face (I think the angels in heaven must have been glad to welcome that pretty innocent smile); and it was only the next day, after my wife had gone to lie down, and I sat keeping watch by it, that I remembered the condition of its parents, and thought, I can't tell with what a pang, that I had not money left to bury

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the little thing, and wept bitter tears of despair. Now, at last, I thought I must apply to my poor mother, for this was a sacred necessity; and I took paper, and wrote her a letter at the baby's side, and told her of our condition. But, thank Heaven! I never sent the letter; for as I went to the desk to get sealing-wax and seal that dismal letter, my eyes fell upon the diamond-pin that I had quite forgotten, and that was lying in the drawer of the desk.

I looked into the bedroom,—my poor wife was asleep; she had been watching for three nights and days, and had fallen asleep from sheer fatigue; and I ran out to a pawnbroker's with the diamond, and received seven guineas for it, and coming back put the money into the landlady's hand, and told her to get what was needful. My wife was still asleep when I came back; and when she woke, we persuaded her to go downstairs to the landlady's parlour; and meanwhile the necessary preparations were made, and the poor child consigned to its coffin.

The next day, after all was over, Mrs. Stokes gave me back three out of the seven guineas; and then I could not help sobbing out to her my doubts and wretchedness, telling her that this was the last money I had; and when that was gone I knew not what was to become of the best wife that ever a man was blest with.

My wife was downstairs with the woman. Poor Gus, who was with me, and quite as much affected as any of the party, took me by the arm, and led me downstairs; and we quite forgot all about the prison and the rules, and walked a long long way across Blackfriars Bridge, the kind fellow striving as much as possible to console me.

When we came back, it was in the evening. The first person who met me in the house was my kind mother, who fell into my arms with many tears and who rebuked me tenderly for not having told her of my necessities. She never should have known of them, she said; but she had not heard from me since I wrote

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announcing the birth of the child, and she felt uneasy about my silence; and meeting Mr. Smithers in the street, asked from him news concerning me: whereupon that gentleman, with some little show of alarm, told her that he thought her daughter-in-law was confined in an uncomfortable place; that Mrs. Hoggarty had left us; finally, that I was in prison. This news at once despatched my poor mother on her travels, and she had only just come from the prison, where she learned my address.

I asked her whether she had seen my wife, and how she found her. Rather to my amaze she said that Mary was out with the landlady when she arrived; and eight —nine o'clock came, and she was absent still.

At ten o'clock returned—not my wife, but Mrs. Stokes, and with her a gentleman, who shook hands with me on coming into the room, and said, 'Mr. Titmarsh, I don't know whether you will remember me; my name is Tiptoff. I have brought you a note from Mrs. Titmarsh, and a message from my wife, who sincerely commiserates your loss, and begs you will not be uneasy at Mrs. Titmarsh's absence. She has been good enough to promise to pass the night with Lady Tiptoff; and I am sure you will not object to her being away from you, while she is giving happiness to a sick mother and a sick child.' After a few more words, my Lord left us. My wife's note only said that Mrs. Stokes would tell me all.

CHAPTER XIII

IN WHICH IT IS SHOWN THAT A GOOD WIFE IS THE BEST DIAMOND A MAN CAN WEAR IN HIS BOSOM

'Mrs. Titmarsh, ma'am,' says Mrs. Stokes, 'before I gratify your curiosity, ma'am, permit me to observe that angels is scarce; and its rare to have one, much more

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two, in a family. Both your son, and your daughter-in-law, ma'am, are of that uncommon sort; they are, now, reely, ma'am.'

My mother said she thanked God for both of us; and Mrs. Stokes proceeded:—

'When the fu——when the seminary, ma'am, was concluded this morning, your poor daughter-in-law was glad to take shelter in my humble parlour, ma'am; where she wept, and told a thousand stories of the little cherub that's gone. Heaven bless us! it was here but a month, and no one could have thought it could have done such a many things in that time. But a mother's eyes are clear, ma'am; and I had just such another angel, my dear little Antony, that was born before Jemima, and would have been twenty-three now were he in this wicked world, ma'am. However, I won't speak of him, ma'am, but of what took place.

'You must know, ma'am, that Mrs. Titmarsh remained downstairs while Mr. Samuel was talking with his friend Mr. Hoskins; and the poor thing would not touch a bit of dinner, though we had it made comfortable; and after dinner, it was with difficulty I could get her to sup a little drop of wine-and-water, and dip a toast in it. It was the first morsel that had passed her lips for many a long hour, ma'am.

'Well, she would not speak, and I thought it best not to interrupt her; but she sat and looked at my two youngest that were playing on the rug; and just as Mr. Titmarsh and his friend Gus went out, the boy brought the newspaper, ma'am,—it always comes from three to four, and I began a-reading of it. But I couldn't read much, for thinking of poor Mr. Sam's sad face as he went out, and the sad story he told me about his money being so low; and every now and then I stopped reading, and bade Mrs. T. not to take on so; and told her some stories about my dear little Antony.

'"Ah!" says she, sobbing, and looking at the young

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ones, "you have other children, Mrs. Stokes; but that—that was my only one;" and she flung back in her chair, and cried fit to break her heart; and I knew that the cry would do her good, and so went back to my paper—the *Morning Post*, ma'am; I always read it, for I like to know what's a-going on in the West End.

'The very first thing that my eyes lighted upon was this:—"Wanted, immediately, a respectable person as wet-nurse. Apply at No.—, Grosvenor Square." "Bless us and save us!" says I, "here's poor Lady Tiptoff ill;" for I knew her Ladyship's address, and how she was confined on the very same day with Mrs. T.: and, for the matter of that, her Ladyship knows *my* address, having visited here.

'A sudden thought came over me. "My dear Mrs. Titmarsh," said I, "you know how poor and how good your husband is?"

'"Yes," says she, rather surprised.

'"Well, my dear," says I, looking her hard in the face, "Lady Tiptoff, who knows him, wants a nurse for her son, Lord Poynings. Will you be a brave woman, and look for the place, and mayhap replace the little one that God has taken from you?"

'She began to tremble and blush; and then I told her what you, Mr. Sam, had told me the other day about your money matters; and no sooner did she hear it than she sprung to her bonnet, and said, "Come, come:" and in five minutes she had me by the arm, and we walked together to Grosvenor Square. The air did her no harm, Mr. Sam, and during the whole of the walk she never cried but once, and then it was at seeing a nursery-maid in the square.

'A great fellow in livery opens the door, and says, "You're the forty-fifth 'as come about this 'ere place; but, fust, let me ask you a preliminary question. Are you a Hirishwoman?"

'"No, sir," says Mrs. T.

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'"That suffishnt, mem," says the gentleman in plush; "I see you're not by your axnt. Step this way, ladies, if you please. You'll find some more candidix for the place upstairs; but I sent away forty-four happlicants, because they *was* Hirish."

'We were taken upstairs over very soft carpets, and brought into a room, and told by an old lady who was there to speak very softly, for my Lady was only two rooms off. And when I asked how the baby and her Ladyship were, the old lady told me both were pretty well: only the doctor said Lady Tiptoff was too delicate to nurse any longer; and so it was considered necessary to have a wet-nurse.

'There was another young woman in the room—a tall fine woman as ever you saw—that looked very angry and contempshious at Mrs. T. and me, and said, "I've brought a letter from the duchess whose daughter I nust; and I think, Mrs. Blenkinsop, mem, my Lady Tiptoff may look far before she finds such another nuss as me. Five feet six high, had the small-pox, married to a corporal in the Lifeguards, perfectly healthy, best of charactiers, only drink water; and as for the child, ma'am, if her Ladyship had six, I've a plenty for them all."

'As the woman was making this speech, a little gentleman in black came in from the next room, treading as if on velvet. The woman got up, and made him a low curtsey, and folding her arms on her great broad chest, repeated the speech she had made before. Mrs. T. did not get up from her chair, but only made a sort of a bow; which, to be sure, I thought was ill manners, as this gentleman was evidently the apothecary. He looked hard at her and said, "Well, my good woman, and are you come about the place too?"

'"Yes, sir," says she, blushing.

'"You seem very delicate. How old is your child? How many have you had? What character have you?"

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'Your wife didn't answer a word; so I stepped up and said, "Sir," says I, "this lady has just lost her first child, and isn't used to look for places, being the daughter of a captain in the navy; so you'll excuse her want of manners in not getting up when you came in."

'The doctor at this sat down and began talking very kindly to her; he said he was afraid that her application would be unsuccessful, as Mrs. Horner came very strongly recommended from the Duchess of Doncaster, whose relative Lady Tiptoff was; and presently my Lady appeared, looking very pretty, ma'am, in an elegant lace-cap and a sweet muslin *robe-de-sham*.

'A nurse came out of her Ladyship's room with her; and while my Lady was talking to us, walked up and down in the next room with something in her arms.

'First, my Lady spoke to Mrs. Horner, and then to Mrs. T.; but all the while she was talking, Mrs. Titmarsh, rather rudely, as I thought, ma'am, was looking into the next room: looking—looking at the baby there with all her might. My Lady asked her her name, and if she had any character; and as she did not speak, I spoke up for her, and said she was the wife of one of the best men in the world; that her Ladyship knew the gentleman, too, and had brought him a haunch of vension. Then Lady Tiptoff looked up quite astonished, and I told the whole story: how you had been head clerk, and that rascal, Brough, had brought you to ruin. "Poor thing!" said my Lady: Mrs. Titmarsh did not speak, but still kept looking at the baby; and the great big grenadier of a Mrs. Horner looked angrily at her.

'"Poor thing!" says my Lady, taking Mrs. T.'s hand very kind, "she seems very young. How old are you, my dear?"

'"Five weeks and two days!" says your wife, sobbing.

'Mrs. Horner burst into a laugh; but there was a

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tear in my Lady's eyes, for she knew what the poor thing was a-thinking of.

'"Silence, woman!" says she angrily to the great grenadier woman; and at this moment the child in the next room began crying.

'As soon as your wife heard the noise, she sprang from her chair and made a step forward, and put both her hands to her breast and said, "The child—the child—give it me!" and then began to cry again.

'My lady looked at her for a moment, and then ran into the next room and brought her the baby; and the baby clung to her as if he knew her: and a pretty sight it was to see that dear woman with the child at her bosom.

'When my Lady saw it, what do you think she did? After looking on it for a bit, she put her arms round your wife's neck and kissed her.

'"My dear," said she, "I am sure you are as good as you are pretty, and you shall keep the child: and I thank God for sending you to me!"

'These were her very words; and Dr. Bland, who was standing by, says, "It's a second judgment of Solomon!"

'"I suppose, my Lady, you don't want *me?*" says the big woman, with another curtsey.

'"Not in the least!" answers my Lady haughtily, and the grenadier left the room: and then I told all your story at full length, and Mrs. Blenkinsop kept me to tea, and I saw the beautiful room that Mrs. Titmarsh is to have next to Lady Tiptoff's; and when my Lord came home, what does he do but insist upon coming back with me here in a hackney-coach, as he said he must apologise to you for keeping your wife away.'

I could not help, in my own mind, connecting this strange event which, in the midst of our sorrow, came to console us, and in our poverty to give us bread,—I could not help connecting it with the *diamond-pin*, and

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"It's a second judgment of Solomon!"

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fancying that the disappearance of that ornament had somehow brought a different and a better sort of luck into my family. And though some gents who read this, may call me a poor-spirited fellow for allowing my wife to go out to service, who was bred a lady and ought to have servants herself; yet, for my part, I confess I did not feel one minute's scruple or mortification on the subject. If you love a person, is it not a pleasure to feel obliged to him? And this, in consequence, I felt. I was proud and happy at being able to think that my dear wife should be able to labour and earn bread for me, now misfortune had put it out of my power to support me and her. And now, instead of making any reflections of my own upon prison discipline, I will recommend the reader to consult that admirable chapter in the Life of Mr. Pickwick in which the same theme is handled, and which shows how silly it is to deprive honest men of the means of labour just at the moment when they most want it. What could I do? There were one or two gents in the prison who could work (literary gents,—one wrote his 'Travels in Mesopotamia,' and the other his 'Sketches at Almack's,' in the place); but all the occupation I could find was walking down Bridge Street, and then up Bridge Street, and staring at Alderman Waithman's windows, and then at the black man who swept the crossing. I never gave him anything; but I envied him his trade and his broom, and the money that continually fell into his old hat. But I was not allowed even to carry a broom.

Twice or thrice—for Lady Tiptoff did not wish her little boy often to breathe the air of such a close place as Salisbury Square—my dear Mary came in the thundering carriage to see me. They were merry meetings; and—if the truth must be told—twice, when nobody was by, I jumped into the carriage and had a drive with her; and when I had seen her home, jumped into another hackney-coach and drove back. But this was only twice;

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for the system was dangerous, and it might bring me into trouble, and it cost three shillings from Grosvenor Square to Ludgate Hill.

Here, meanwhile, my good mother kept me company; and what should we read of one day but the marriage of Mrs. Hoggarty and the Rev. Grimes Wapshot! My mother, who never loved Mrs. H., now said that she should repent all her life having allowed me to spend so much of my time with that odious ungrateful woman; and added that she and I too were justly punished for worshipping the mammon of unrighteousness and forgetting our natural feelings for the sake of my aunt's paltry lucre. 'Well, Amen!' said I. 'This is the end of all our fine schemes! My aunt's money and my aunt's diamond were the causes of my ruin, and now they are clear gone, thank Heaven! and I hope the old lady will be happy; and I must say I don't envy the Rev. Grimes Wapshot.' So we put Mrs. Hoggarty out of our thoughts, and made ourselves as comfortable as might be.

Rich and great people are slower in making Christians of their children than we poor ones, and little Lord Poynings was not christened until the month of June. A duke was one godfather, and Mr. Edmund Preston, the State Secretary, another; and that kind Lady Jane Preston, whom I have before spoken of, was the godmother to her nephew. She had not long been made acquainted with my wife's history; and both she and her sister loved her heartily and were very kind to her. Indeed, there was not a single soul in the house, high or low, but was fond of that good sweet creature; and the very footmen were as ready to serve her as they were their own mistress.

'I tell you what, sir,' says one of them. 'You see, Tit my boy, I'm a connyshure, and up to snough; and if ever I see a lady in my life, Mrs. Titmarsh is one. I can't be familiar with her—I've tried——'

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'Have you, sir?' said I.

'Don't look so indignant! I can't, I say, be familiar with her as I am with you. There's a somethink in her, a jennysquaw, that haws me, sir! and even my Lord's own man, that 'as 'ad as much success as any gentleman in Europe—he says that, cuss him——'

'Mr. Charles,' says I, 'tell my Lord's own man that, if he wants to keep his place and his whole skin, he will never address a single word to that lady but such as a servant should utter in the presence of his mistress; and take notice that I am a gentleman, though a poor one, and will murder the first man who does her wrong!'

Mr. Charles only said 'Gammin!' to this: but psha: in bragging about my own spirit, I forgot to say what great good fortune my dear wife's conduct procured for me.

On the christening-day, Mr. Preston offered her first a five, and then a twenty-pound note; but she declined either; but she did not decline a present that the two ladies made her together, and this was no other than *my release from the Fleet.* Lord Tiptoff's lawyer paid every one of the bills against me, and that happy christening-day made me a free man. Ah! who shall tell the pleasure of that day, or the merry dinner we had in Mary's room at Lord Tiptoff's house, when my Lord and my Lady came upstairs to shake hands with me!

'I have been speaking to Mr. Preston,' says my Lord, 'the gentleman with whom you had a memorable quarrel, and he has forgiven it, although he was in the wrong, and promises to do something for you. We are going down, meanwhile, to his house at Richmond: and be sure, Mr. Titmarsh, I will not fail to keep you in his mind.'

'*Mrs.* Titmarsh will do that,' says my Lady; 'for Edmund is wofully smitten with her!' And Mary blushed, and I laughed, and we were all very happy: and sure enough there came from Richmond a letter to me,

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stating that I was appointed fourth clerk in the Tape and Sealing-Wax Office, with a salary of £80 per annum.

Here perhaps my story ought to stop; for I was happy at last, and have never since, thank Heaven! known want: but Gus insists that I should add how I gave up the place in the Tape and Sealing-Wax Office, and for what reason. That excellent Lady Jane Preston is long gone, and so is Mr. P—— off in an apoplexy, and there is no harm now in telling the story.

The fact was, that Mr. Preston had fallen in love with Mary in a much more serious way than any of us imagined; for I do believe he invited his brother-in-law to Richmond for no other purpose than to pay court to his son's nurse. And one day, as I was coming post-haste to thank him for the place he had procured for me, being directed by Mr. Charles to the 'scrubbery,' as he called it, which led down to the river—there, sure enough, I found Mr. Preston, on his knees too, on the gravel-walk, and before him Mary, holding the little lord.

'Dearest creature!' says Mr. Preston, 'do but listen to me, and I'll make your husband consul at Timbuctoo! He shall *never* know of it, I tell you: he *can* never know of it. I pledge you my word as a Cabinet Minister! Oh, don't look at me in that arch way: by heavens, your eyes kill me!'

Mary, when she saw me, burst out laughing, and ran down the lawn; my Lord making a huge crowing, too, and holding out his little fat hands. Mr. Preston, who was a heavy man, was slowly getting up, when, catching a sight of me looking as fierce as the crater of Mount Etna,—he gave a start back and lost his footing, and rolled over and over, walloping into the water at the garden's edge. It was not deep, and he came bubbling and snorting out again in as much fright as fury.

'You d——d ungrateful villain!' says he, 'what do you stand there laughing for?'

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'I'm waiting your orders for Timbuctoo, sir,' says I, and laughed fit to die; and so did my Lord Tiptoff and his party, who joined us on the lawn: and Jeames the footman came forward and helped Mr. Preston out of the water.

'Oh, you old sinner!' says my Lord, as his brother-in-law came up the slope. 'Will that heart of yours be always so susceptible, you romantic, apoplectic, immoral man?'

Mr. Preston went away, looking blue with rage, and ill-treated his wife for a whole month afterwards.

'At any rate,' says my Lord, 'Titmarsh here has got a place through our friend's unhappy attachment; and Mrs. Titmarsh has only laughed at him, so there is no harm there. It's an ill wind that blows nobody good, you know.'

'Such a wind as that, my Lord, with due respect to you, shall never do good to me. I have learned in the past few years what it is to make friends with the mammon of unrighteousness; and that out of such friendship no good comes in the end to honest men. It shall never be said that Sam Titmarsh got a place because a great man was in love with his wife; and were the situation ten times as valuable, I should blush every day I entered the office-doors in thinking of the base means by which my fortune was made. You have made me free, my Lord; and, thank God! I am willing to work. I can easily get a clerkship with the assistance of my friends; and with that and my wife's income, we can manage honestly to face the world.'

This rather long speech I made with some animation; for, look you, I was not over well pleased that his Lordship should think me capable of speculating in any way on my wife's beauty.

My Lord at first turned red, and looked rather angry; but at last he held out his hand and said, 'You are right, Titmarsh, and I am wrong; and let me tell you

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in confidence, that I think you are a very honest fellow. You shan't lose by your honesty, I promise you.'

Nor did I: for I am at this present moment Lord Tiptoff's steward and right-hand man: and am I not a happy father? and is not my wife loved and respected by all the country? and is not Gus Hoskins my brother-in-law, partner with his excellent father in the leather way, and the delight of all his nephews and nieces for his tricks and fun?

As for Mr. Brough, that gentleman's history would fill a volume of itself. Since he vanished from the London world, he has become celebrated on the Continent, where he has acted a thousand parts, and met all sorts of changes of high and low fortune. One thing we may at least admire in the man, and that is, his undaunted courage; and I can't help thinking, as I have said before, that there must be some good in him, seeing the way in which his family are faithful to him. With respect to Roundhand, I had best also speak tenderly. The case of Roundhand *v.* Tidd is still in the memory of the public; nor can I ever understand how Bill Tidd, so poetic as he was, could ever take on with such a fat, odious, vulgar woman as Mrs. R., who was old enough to be his mother.

As soon as we were in prosperity, Mr. and Mrs. Grimes Wapshot made overtures to be reconciled to us; and Mr. Wapshot laid bare to me all the baseness of Mr. Smithers's conduct in the Brough transaction. Smithers had also endeavoured to pay his court to me, once when I went down to Somersetshire; but I cut his pretensions short, as I have shown. 'He it was,' said Mr. Wapshot, 'who induced Mrs. Grimes (Mrs. Hoggarty she was then) to purchase the West Diddlesex shares: receiving, of course, a large bonus for himself. But directly he found that Mrs. Hoggarty had fallen into the hands of Mr. Brough, and that he should lose the income he made from the lawsuits with her tenants and from the

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management of her landed property, he determined to rescue her from that villain Brough, and came to town for the purpose. He also,' added Mr. Wapshot, 'vented his malignant slander against me; but Heaven was pleased to frustrate his base schemes. In the proceedings consequent on Brough's bankruptcy, Mr. Smithers could not appear; for his own share in the transactions of the Company would have been most certainly shown up. During his absence from London, I became the husband —the happy husband—of your aunt. But though, my dear sir, I have been the means of bringing her to grace, I cannot disguise from you that Mrs. W. has faults which all my pastoral care has not enabled me to eradicate. She is close of her money, sir—very close; nor can I make that charitable use of her property which, as a clergyman, I ought to do; for she has tied up every shilling of it, and only allows me half-a-crown a week for pocket-money. In temper, too, she is very violent. During the first years of our union, I strove with her; yea, I chastised her; but her perseverance, I must confess, got the better of me. I make no more remonstrances, but am as a lamb in her hands, and she leads me whithersoever she pleases.'

Mr. Wapshot concluded his tale by borrowing half-a-crown from me (it was at the Somerset Coffee-house in the Strand, where he came, in the year 1832, to wait upon me), and I saw him go from thence into the gin-shop opposite, and come out of the gin-shop half-an-hour afterwards, reeling across the streets, and perfectly intoxicated.

He died next year: when his widow, who called herself Mrs. Hoggarty-Grimes-Wapshot, of Castle Hoggarty, said that over the grave of her saint all earthly resentments were forgotten, and proposed to come and live with us; paying us, of course, a handsome remuneration. But this offer my wife and I respectfully declined; and once more she altered her will, which

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once more she had made in our favour; called us ungrateful wretches and pampered menials, and left all her property to the Irish Hoggarties. But seeing my wife one day in a carriage with Lady Tiptoff, and hearing that we had been at the great ball at Tiptoff Castle, and that I had grown to be a rich man, she changed her mind again, sent for me on her death-bed, and left me the farms of Slopperton and Squashtail, with all her savings for fifteen years. Peace be to her soul! for certainly she left me a very pretty property.

Though I am no literary man myself, my cousin Michael (who generally, when he is short of coin, comes down and passes a few months with us) says that my Memoirs may be of some use to the public (meaning, I suspect, to himself); and if so, I am glad to serve him and them, and hereby take farewell: bidding all gents who peruse this, to be cautious of their money, if they have it; to be still more cautious of their friends' money; to remember that great profits imply great risks; and that the great shrewd capitalists of this country would not be content with four per cent. for their money, if they could securely get more: above all, I entreat them never to embark in any speculation, of which the conduct is not perfectly clear to them, and of which the agents are not perfectly open and loyal.

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MEN'S WIVES

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CHAPTER I

WHICH IS ENTIRELY INTRODUCTORY — CONTAINS AN ACCOUNT OF MISS CRUMP, HER SUITORS, AND HER FAMILY CIRCLE

In a certain quiet and sequestered nook of the retired village of London—perhaps in the neighbourhood of Berkeley Square, or at any rate somewhere near Burlington Gardens—there was once a house of entertainment called the 'Bootjack Hotel.' Mr. Crump, the landlord, had, in the outset of life, performed the duties of Boots in some inn even more frequented than his own, and, far from being ashamed of his origin, as many persons are in the days of their prosperity, had thus

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solemnly recorded it over the hospitable gate of his hotel.

Crump married Miss Budge, so well known to the admirers of the festive dance on the other side of the water as Miss Delancy; and they had one daughter, named Morgiana, after that celebrated part in the 'Forty Thieves' which Miss Budge performed with unbounded applause both at the 'Surrey' and 'The Wells.' Mrs. Crump sat in a little bar, profusely ornamented with pictures of the dancers of all ages, from Hillisberg, Rose, Parisot, who plied the light fantastic toe in 1805, down to the Sylphides of our day. There was in the collection a charming portrait of herself, done by De Wilde; she was in the dress of Morgiana, and in the act of pouring, to very slow music, a quantity of boiling oil into one of the forty jars. In this sanctuary she sat, with black eyes, black hair, a purple face and a turban; and morning, noon, or night, as you went into the parlour of the hotel, there was Mrs. Crump taking tea (with a little something in it), looking at the fashions, or reading Cumberland's 'British Theatre.' The *Sunday Times* was her paper, for she voted the *Dispatch*, that journal which is taken in by most ladies of her profession, to be vulgar and Radical, and loved the theatrical gossip in which the other mentioned journal abounds.

The fact is, that the 'Royal Bootjack,' though a humble, was a very genteel house; and a very little persuasion would induce Mr. Crump, as he looked at his own door in the sun, to tell you that he had himself once drawn off with that very boot-jack the top-boots of His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales and the first gentleman in Europe. While, then, the houses of entertainment in the neighbourhood were loud in their pretended Liberal politics, the 'Bootjack' stuck to the good old Conservative line, and was only frequented by such persons as were of that way of thinking. There were two parlours, much accustomed, one for the gentlemen

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of the shoulder-knot, who came from the houses of their employers hard by; another for some 'gents who used the 'ouse,' as Mrs. Crump would say (Heaven bless her !) in her simple Cockniac dialect, and who formed a little club there.

I forgot to say that while Mrs. C. was sipping her eternal tea or washing up her endless blue china, you might often hear Miss Morgiana employed at the little red-silk cottage piano, singing, 'Come where the haspens quiver,' or 'Bonny lad, march over hill and furrow,' or 'My art and lute,' or any other popular piece of the day. And the dear girl sang with very considerable skill, too, for she had a fine loud voice, which, if not always in tune, made up for that defect by its great energy and activity; and Morgiana was not content with singing the mere tune, but gave every one of the roulades, flourishes, and ornaments as she heard them at the theatres by Mrs. Humby, Mrs. Waylett, or Madame Vestris. The girl had a fine black eye like her mamma, a grand enthusiasm for the stage, as every actor's child will have, and, if the truth must be known, had appeared many and many a time at the theatre in Catherine Street, in minor parts first, and then in Little Pickle, in Desdemona, in Rosina, and in Miss Foote's part where she used to dance: I have not the name to my hand, but think it is Davidson. Four times in the week, at least, her mother and she used to sail off at night to some place of public amusement, for Mrs. Crump had a mysterious acquaintance with all sorts of theatrical personages; and the gates of her old haunt 'The Wells,' of the 'Cobourg' (by the kind permission of Mrs. Davidge), nay, of the 'Lane' and the 'Market' themselves, flew open before her 'Open sesame,' as the robbers' door did to her colleague, Ali Baba (Hornbuckle), in the operatic piece in which she was so famous.

Beer was Mr. Crump's beverage, diversified by a little gin, in the evenings; and little need be said of this

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gentleman, except that he discharged his duties honourably, and filled the president's chair at the club as completely as it could possibly be filled; for he could not even sit in it in his great-coat, so accurately was the seat adapted to him. His wife and daughter, perhaps, thought somewhat slightingly of him, for he had no literary tastes, and had never been at a theatre since he took his bride from one. He was valet to Lord Slapper at the time, and certain it is that his lordship set him up in the 'Bootjack,' and that stories *had* been told. But what are such to you or me? Let bygones be bygones; Mrs. Crump was quite as honest as her neighbours, and Miss had five hundred pounds to be paid down on the day of her wedding.

Those who know the habits of the British tradesman are aware that he has gregarious propensities like any lord in the land; that he loves a joke, that he is not averse to a glass; that after the day's toil he is happy to consort with men of his degree; and that as society is not so far advanced among us as to allow him to enjoy the comfort of splendid club-houses, which are open to many persons with not a tenth part of his pecuniary means, he meets his friends in the cosy tavern parlour, where a neat sanded floor, a large Windsor chair, and a glass of hot something and water, make him as happy as any of the clubmen in their magnificent saloons.

At the 'Bootjack' was, as we have said, a very genteel and select society, called the 'Kidney Club,' from the fact that on Saturday evenings a little graceful supper of broiled kidneys was usually discussed by the members of the club. Saturday was their grand night; not but that they met on all other nights in the week when inclined for festivity: and indeed some of them could not come on Saturdays in the summer, having elegant villas in the suburbs, where they passed the six-and-thirty hours of recreation that are happily to be found at the end of every week.

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There was Mr. Balls, the great grocer of South Audley Street, a warm man, who, they say, had his twenty thousand pounds; Jack Snaffle of the mews hard by, a capital fellow for a song; Clinker the ironmonger: all married gentlemen, and in the best line of business; Tressle, the undertaker, &c. No liveries were admitted into the room, as may be imagined, but one or two select butlers and major-domos joined the circle; for the persons composing it knew very well how important it was to be on good terms with these gentlemen: and many a time my lord's account would never have been paid, and my lady's large order never have been given, but for the conversation which took place at the 'Boot-jack,' and the friendly intercourse subsisting between all the members of the society.

The tiptop men of the society were two bachelors, and two as fashionable tradesmen as any in the town: Mr. Woolsey, from Stultz's, of the famous house of Linsey, Woolsey & Co. of Conduit Street, Tailors; and Mr. Eglantine, the celebrated perruquier and perfumer of Bond Street, whose soaps, razors, and patent ventilating scalps are known throughout Europe. Linsey, the senior partner of the tailors' firm, had his handsome mansion in Regent's Park, drove his buggy, and did little more than lend his name to the house. Woolsey lived in it, was the working man of the firm, and it was said that his cut was as magnificent as that of any man in the profession. Woolsey and Eglantine were rivals in many ways—rivals in fashion, rivals in wit, and, above all, rivals for the hand of an amiable young lady whom we have already mentioned, the dark-eyed songstress Morgiana Crump. They were both desperately in love with her, that was the truth; and each, in the absence of the other, abused his rival heartily. Of the hair-dresser Woolsey said, that as for Eglantine being his real name, it was all his (Mr. Woolsey's) eye; that he was in the hands of the Jews, and his stock and grand shop

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eaten up by usury. And with regard to Woolsey, Eglantine remarked, that his pretence of being descended from the Cardinal was all nonsense: that he was a partner, certainly, in the firm, but had only a sixteenth share; and that the firm could never get their moneys in, and had an immense number of bad debts in their books. As is usual, there was a great deal of truth and a great deal of malice in these tales; however, the gentlemen were, take them all in all, in a very fashionable way of business, and had their claims to Miss Morgiana's hand backed by the parents. Mr. Crump was a partisan of the tailor; while Mrs. C. was a strong advocate for the claims of the enticing perfumer.

Now, it was a curious fact, that these two gentlemen were each in need of the other's services—Woolsey being afflicted with premature baldness, or some other necessity for a wig still more fatal—Eglantine being a very fat man, who required much art to make his figure at all decent. He wore a brown frock-coat and frogs, and attempted by all sorts of contrivances to hide his obesity; but Woolsey's remark, that, dress as he would, he would always look like a snob, and that there was only one man in England who could make a gentleman of him, went to the perfumer's soul; and if there was one thing on earth he longed for (not including the hand of Miss Crump) it was to have a coat from Linsey's, in which costume he was sure that Morgiana would not resist him.

If Eglantine was uneasy about the coat, on the other hand he attacked Woolsey atrociously on the score of his wig; for though the latter went to the best makers, he never could get a peruke to sit naturally upon him; and the unhappy epithet of Mr. Wiggins, applied to him on one occasion by the barber, stuck to him ever after in the club, and made him writhe when it was uttered. Each man would have quitted the 'Kidneys' in disgust long since, but for the other—for each had an attraction

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in the place, and dared not leave the field in possession of his rival.

To do Miss Morgiana justice, it must be said, that she did not encourage one more than another; but as far as accepting eau-de-Cologne and hair combs from the perfumer—some opera tickets, a treat to Greenwich, and a piece of real Genoa velvet for a bonnet (it had originally been intended for a waistcoat), from the admiring tailor, she had been equally kind to each, and in return had made each a present of a lock of her beautiful glossy hair. It was all she had to give, poor girl! and what could she do but gratify her admirers by this cheap and artless testimony of her regard? A pretty scene and quarrel took place between the rivals on the day when they discovered that each was in possession of one of Morgiana's ringlets.

Such, then, were the owners and inmates of the little 'Bootjack,' from whom and which, as this chapter is exceedingly discursive and descriptive, we must separate the reader for a while, and carry him—it is only into Bond Street, so no gentleman need be afraid—carry him into Bond Street, where some other personages are awaiting his consideration.

Not far from Mr. Eglantine's shop in Bond Street, stand, as is very well known, the Windsor Chambers. The West Diddlesex Association (Western Branch), the British and Foreign Soap Company, the celebrated attorneys Kite & Levison, have their respective offices here; and as the names of the other inhabitants of the chambers are not only painted on the walls, but also registered in Mr. Boyle's 'Court Guide,' it is quite unnecessary that they should be repeated here. Among them, on the entresol (between the splendid saloons of the Soap Company on the first floor, with their statue of Britannia presenting a packet of the soap to Europe, Asia, Africa, and America, and the West Diddlesex Western Branch on the basement)—lives a gentleman

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by the name of Mr. Howard Walker. The brass plate on the door of that gentleman's chambers had the word 'Agency' inscribed beneath his name; and we are therefore at liberty to imagine that he followed that mysterious occupation. In person Mr. Walker was very genteel; he had large whiskers, dark eyes (with a slight cast in them) a cane, and a velvet waistcoat. He was a member of a club; had an admission to the opera, and knew every face behind the scenes; and was in the habit of using a number of French phrases in his conversation, having picked up a smattering of that language during a residence 'on the Continent;' in fact, he had found it very convenient at various times of his life to dwell in the city of Boulogne, where he acquired a knowledge of smoking, *écarté*, and billiards, which was afterwards of great service to him. He knew all the best tables in town, and the marker at Hunt's could only give him ten. He had some fashionable acquaintances too, and you might see him walking arm-in-arm with such gentlemen as my Lord Vauxhall, the Marquess of Billingsgate, or Captain Buff; and at the same time nodding to young Moses, the dandy bailiff; or Loder, the gambling-house keeper; or Aminadab, the cigar-seller in the Quadrant. Sometimes he wore a pair of moustaches, and was called Captain Walker; grounding his claim to that title upon the fact of having once held a commission in the service of Her Majesty the Queen of Portugal. It scarcely need be said that he had been through the Insolvent Court many times. But to those who did not know his history intimately there was some difficulty in identifying him with the individual who had so taken the benefit of the law, inasmuch as in his schedule his name appeared as Hooker Walker, wine-merchant, commission-agent, music-seller, or what not. The fact is, that though he preferred to call himself Howard, Hooker was his Christian name, and it had been bestowed on him by his worthy old father, who

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was a clergyman, and had intended his son for that profession. But as the old gentleman died in York Gaol, where he was a prisoner for debt, he was never able to put his pious intentions with regard to his son into execution; and the young fellow (as he was wont with many oaths to assert) was thrown on his own resources, and became a man of the world at a very early age.

What Mr. Howard Walker's age was at the time of the commencement of this history, and, indeed, for an indefinite period before or afterwards, it is impossible to determine. If he were eight-and-twenty, as he asserted himself, Time had dealt hardly with him: his hair was thin, there were many crows'-feet about his eyes, and other signs in his countenance of the progress of decay. If, on the contrary, he were forty, as Sam Snaffle declared, who himself had misfortunes in early life, and vowed he knew Mr. Walker in Whitecross Street Prison in 1820, he was a very young-looking person considering his age. His figure was active and slim, his leg neat, and he had not in his whiskers a single white hair.

It must, however, be owned that he used Mr. Eglantine's Regenerative Unction (which will make your whiskers as black as your boot), and, in fact, he was a pretty constant visitor at that gentleman's emporium: dealing with him largely for soaps and articles of perfumery, which he had at an exceedingly low rate. Indeed, he was never known to pay Mr. Eglantine one single shilling for those objects of luxury, and, having them on such moderate terms, was enabled to indulge in them pretty copiously. Thus Mr. Walker was almost as great a nosegay as Mr. Eglantine himself: his handkerchief was scented with verbena, his hair with jessamine, and his coat had usually a fine perfume of cigars, which rendered his presence in a small room almost instantaneously remarkable. I have described Mr. Walker thus accurately, because, in truth, it is more

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with characters than with astounding events that this little history deals, and Mr. Walker is one of the principal of our *dramatis personæ*.

And so, having introduced Mr. W., we will walk over with him to Mr. Eglantine's emporium, where that gentleman is in waiting, too, to have his likeness taken.

There is about an acre of plate-glass under the Royal arms on Mr. Eglantine's shop-window: and at night, when the gas is lighted, and the washballs are illuminated, and the lambent flame plays fitfully over numberless bottles of vari-coloured perfumes—now flashes on a case of razors, and now lightens up a crystal vase, containing a hundred thousand of his patent tooth-brushes—the effect of the sight may be imagined. You don't suppose that he is a creature who has those odious, simpering wax figures in his window, that are called by the vulgar dummies? He is above such a wretched artifice; and it is my belief that he would as soon have his own head chopped off, and placed as a trunkless decoration to his shop-window, as allow a dummy to figure there. On one pane you read in elegant gold letters 'Eglantinia'—'tis his essence for the handkerchief; on the other is written 'Regenerative Unction'—'tis his invaluable pomatum for the hair.

There is no doubt about it: Eglantine's knowledge of his profession amounts to genius. He sells a cake of soap for seven shillings, for which another man would not get a shilling, and his tooth-brushes go off like wild-fire at half-a-guinea apiece. If he has to administer rouge or pearl-powder to ladies, he does it with a mystery and fascination which there is no resisting, and the ladies believe there are no cosmetics like his. He gives his wares unheard-of names, and obtains for them sums equally prodigious. He *can* dress hair—that is a fact—as few men in this age can; and has been known to take twenty pounds in a single night from as many of the first ladies of England when ringlets were in fashion.

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The introduction of bands, he says, made a difference of two thousand pounds a year in his income; and if there is one thing in the world he hates and despises, it is a Madonna. 'I'm not,' says he, 'a tradesman—I'm a *hartist*' (Mr. Eglantine was born in London)—'I'm a hartist; and show me a fine 'ead of air, and I'll dress it for nothink.' He vows that it was his way of dressing Mademoiselle Sontag's hair, that caused the count her husband to fall in love with her; and he has a lock of it in a brooch, and says it was the finest head he ever saw, except one, and that was Morgiana Crump's.

With his genius and his position in the profession, how comes it, then, that Mr. Eglantine was not a man of fortune, as many a less clever has been? If the truth must be told, he loved pleasure, and was in the hands of the Jews. He had been in business twenty years: he had borrowed a thousand pounds to purchase his stock and shop? and he calculated that he had paid upwards of twenty thousand pounds for the use of the one thousand, which was still as much due as on the first day when he entered business. He could show that he had received a thousand dozen of champagne from the disinterested money-dealers with whom he usually negotiated his paper. He had pictures all over his 'studios,' which had been purchased in the same bargains. If he sold his goods at an enormous price, he paid for them at a rate almost equally exorbitant. There was not an article in his shop but came to him through his Israelite providers; and in the very front shop itself sat a gentleman who was the nominee of one of them, and who was called Mr. Mossrose. He was there to superintend the cash account, and to see that certain instalments were paid to his principals, according to certain agreements entered into between Mr. Eglantine and them.

Having that sort of opinion of Mr. Mossrose which Damocles may have had of the sword which hung over his head, of course Mr. Eglantine hated his foreman pro-

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foundly. '*He* an artist,' would the former gentleman exclaim; 'why, he's only a disguised bailiff! Mossrose indeed! The chap's name's Amos, and he sold oranges before he came here.' Mr. Mossrose, on his side, utterly despised Mr. Eglantine, and looked forward to the day when he would become the proprietor of the shop, and take Eglantine for a foreman; and then it would be *his* turn to sneer and bully, and ride the high horse.

Thus it will be seen that there was a skeleton in the great perfumer's house, as the saying is: a worm in his heart's core, and though to all appearance prosperous, he was really in an awkward position.

What Mr. Eglantine's relations were with Mr. Walker may be imagined from the following dialogue which took place between the two gentlemen at five o'clock one summer's afternoon, when Mr. Walker, issuing from his chambers, came across to the perfumer's shop:—

'Is Eglantine at home, Mr. Mossrose?' said Walker to the foreman, who sat in the front shop.

'Don't know—go and look' (meaning go and be hanged); for Mossrose also hated Mr. Walker.

'If you're uncivil I'll break your bones, Mr. *Amos*,' says Mr. Walker sternly.

'I should like to see you try, Mr. *Hooker* Walker,' replies the undaunted shopman; on which the Captain, looking several tremendous canings at him, walked into the back room or 'studio.'

'How are you, Tiny my buck?' says the Captain. 'Much doing?'

'Not a soul in town. I 'aven't touched the hirons all day,' replied Mr. Eglantine, in rather a desponding way.

'Well, just get them ready now, and give my whiskers a turn. I'm going to dine with Billingsgate and some out-and-out fellows at the "Regent," and so, my lad, just do your best.'

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'I can't,' says Mr. Eglantine. 'I expect ladies, Captain, every minute.'

'Very good; I don't want to trouble such a great man, I'm sure. Good-bye, and let me hear from you *this day week*, Mr. Eglantine.' 'This day week' meant that at seven days from that time a certain bill accepted by Mr. Eglantine would be due, and presented for payment.

'Don't be in such a hurry, Captain—do sit down. I'll curl you in one minute. And, I say, won't the party renew?'

'Impossible—it's the third renewal.'

'But I'll make the thing handsome to you;—indeed I will.'

'How much?'

'Will ten pounds do the business?'

'What! offer my principal ten pounds? Are you mad, Eglantine?—A little more of the iron to the left whisker.'

'No, I meant for commission.'

'Well, I'll see if that will do. The party I deal with, Eglantine, has power, I know, and can defer the matter, no doubt. As for me, you know, *I've* nothing to do in the affair, and only act as a friend between you and him. I give you my honour and soul, I do.'

'I know you do, my dear sir.' The last two speeches were lies. The perfumer knew perfectly well that Mr. Walker would pocket the ten pounds; but he was too easy to care for paying it, and too timid to quarrel with such a powerful friend. And he had on three different occasions already paid ten pounds' fine for the renewal of the bill in question, all of which bonuses he knew went to his friend Mr. Walker.

Here, too, the reader will perceive what was, in part, the meaning of the word 'Agency' on Mr. Walker's door. He was a go-between between money-lenders and borrowers in this world, and certain small sums always

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remained with him in the course of the transaction. He was an agent for wine, too; an agent for places to be had through the influence of great men; he was an agent for half-a-dozen theatrical people, male and female, and had the interests of the latter especially, it was said, at heart. Such were a few of the means by which this worthy gentleman contrived to support himself, and if, as he was fond of high living, gambling, and pleasures of all kinds, his revenue was not large enough for his expenditure—why, he got into debt, and settled his bills that way. He was as much at home in the Fleet as in Pall Mall, and quite as happy in the one place as in the other. 'That's the way I take things,' would this philosopher say. 'If I've money, I spend; if I've credit, I borrow; if I'm dunned, I whitewash; and so you can't beat me down.' Happy elasticity of temperament! I do believe that, in spite of his misfortunes and precarious position, there was no man in England whose conscience was more calm, and whose slumbers were more tranquil, than those of Captain Howard Walker.

As he was sitting under the hands of Mr. Eglantine, he reverted to 'the ladies,' whom the latter gentleman professed to expect; said he was a sly dog, a lucky ditto, and asked him if the ladies were handsome.

Eglantine thought there could be no harm in telling a bouncer to a gentleman with whom he was engaged in money transactions; and so, to give the Captain an idea of his solvency and the brilliancy of his future prospects, 'Captain,' said he, 'I've got a hundred and eighty pounds out with you, which you were obliging enough to negotiate for me. Have I, or have I not, two bills out to that amount?'

'Well, my good fellow, you certainly have; and what then?'

'What then? Why, I bet you five pounds to one, that in three months those bills are paid.'

'Done! five pounds to one. I take it.'

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This sudden closing with him made the perfumer rather uneasy; but he was not to pay for three months, and so he said 'Done!' too, and went on: 'What would you say if your bills were paid?'

'Not mine; Pike's.'

'Well, if Pike's were paid; and the Minories' man paid, and every single liability I have cleared off; and that Mossrose flung out of winder, and me and my emporium as free as hair?'

'You don't say so? Is Queen Anne dead? and has she left you a fortune? or what's the luck in the wind now?'

'It's better than Queen Anne, or anybody dying. What should you say to seeing in that very place where Mossrose now sits (hang him!)—seeing the *finest head of 'air now in Europe?* A woman, I tell you—a slap-up lovely woman, who, I'm proud to say, will soon be called Mrs. Heglantine, and will bring me five thousand pounds to her fortune.'

'Well, Tiny, this *is* good luck indeed. I say, you'll be able to do a bill or two for *me* then, hey? You won't forget an old friend?'

'That I won't. I shall have a place at my board for you, Capting; and many's the time I shall 'ope to see you under that ma'ogany.'

'What will the French milliner say? She'll hang herself for despair, Eglantine.'

'Hush! not a word about *'er*. I've sown all my wild oats, I tell you. Eglantine is no longer the gay young bachelor, but the sober married man. I want a heart to share the feelings of mine. I want repose. I'm not so young as I was: I feel it.'

'Pooh! pooh! you are—you are——'

'Well, but I sigh for an 'appy fireside; and I'll have it.'

'And give up that club which you belong to, hey?'

'"The Kidneys?" Oh! of course, no married man should belong to such places: at least, *I'll* not; and I'll

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have my kidneys broiled at home. But be quiet, Captain, if you please; the ladies appointed to——'

'And is it *the* lady you expect? eh, you rogue!'

'Well, get along. It's her and her ma.'

But Mr. Walker determined he wouldn't get along, and would see these lovely ladies before he stirred.

The operation on Mr. Walker's whiskers being concluded, he was arranging his toilet before the glass in an agreeable attitude: his neck out, his enormous pin settled in his stock to his satisfaction, his eyes complacently directed towards the reflection of his left and favourite whisker. Eglantine was laid on a settee, in an easy, though melancholy posture; he was twiddling the tongs with which he had just operated on Walker with one hand, and his right-hand ringlet with the other, and he was thinking—thinking of Morgiana; and then of the bill which was to become due on the 16th; and then of a light-blue velvet waistcoat with gold sprigs, in which he looked very killing, and so was trudging round in his little circle of loves, fears, and vanities. 'Hang it!' Mr. Walker was thinking, 'I *am* a handsome man. A pair of whiskers like mine are not met with every day. If anybody can see that my tuft is dyed, may I be——' When the door was flung open, and a large lady with a curl on her forehead, yellow shawl, a green-velvet bonnet with feathers, half-boots, and a drab gown with tulips and other large exotics painted on it—when, in a word, Mrs. Crump and her daughter bounced into the room.

'Here we are, Mr. E.,' cries Mrs. Crump, in a gay *folâtre* confidential air. 'But law! there's a gent in the room!'

'Don't mind me, ladies,' said the gent alluded to, in his fascinating way. 'I'm a friend of Eglantine's; ain't I, Egg? a chip of the old block, hey?'

'*That* you are,' said the perfumer, starting up.

'An 'air-dresser?' asked Mrs. Crump. 'Well, I

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thought he was; there's something, Mr. E., in gentlemen of your profession so exceeding, so uncommon *distangy*.'

'Madam, you do me proud,' replied the gentleman so complimented, with great presence of mind. 'Will you allow me to try my skill upon you, or upon Miss, your lovely daughter? I'm not so clever as Eglantine, but no bad hand, I assure you.'

'Nonsense, Captain,' interrupted the perfumer, who was uncomfortable somehow at the rencontre between the Captain and the object of his affection. '*He's* not in the profession, Mrs. C. This is my friend Captain Walker, and proud I am to call him my friend.' And then aside to Mrs. C., 'One of the first swells on town, ma'am—a regular tip-topper.'

Humouring the mistake which Mrs. Crump had just made, Mr. Walker thrust the curling-irons into the fire in a minute, and looked round at the ladies with such a fascinating grace, that both, now made acquainted with his quality, blushed and giggled, and were quite pleased. Mammá looked at 'Gina, and 'Gina looked at mamma; and then mamma gave 'Gina a little blow in the region of her little waist, and then both burst out laughing, as ladies will laugh, and as, let us trust, they *may* laugh for ever and ever. Why need there be a reason for laughing? Let us laugh when we are laughy, as we sleep when we are sleepy. And so Mrs. Crump and her demoiselle laughed to their hearts' content; and both fixed their large shining black eyes repeatedly on Mr. Walker.

'I won't leave the room,' said he, coming forward with the heated iron in his hand, and smoothing it on the brown paper with all the dexterity of a professor (for the fact is, Mr. W. every morning curled his own immense whiskers with the greatest skill and care)—'I won't leave the room, Eglantine my boy. My lady here took me for a hairdresser, and so, you know, I've a right to stay.'

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'He can't stay,' said Mrs. Crump, all of a sudden, blushing as red as a peony.

'I shall have on my peignoir, mamma,' said Miss, looking at the gentleman, and then dropping down her eyes and blushing too.

'But he can't stay, 'Gina, I tell you: do you think that I would, before a gentleman, take off my——'

'Mamma means her FRONT!' said Miss, jumping up, and beginning to laugh with all her might; at which the honest landlady of the 'Bootjack,' who loved a joke, although at her own expense, laughed too, and said that no one, except Mr. Crump and Mr. Eglantine, had ever seen her without the ornament in question.

'*Do* go now, you provoking thing, you!' continued Miss C. to Mr. Walker; 'I wish to hear the hoverture, and it's six o'clock now, and we shall never be done against then:' but the way in which Morgiana said '*Do* go,' clearly indicated 'don't' to the perspicacious mind of Mr. Walker.

'Perhaps you 'ad better go,' continued Mr. Eglantine, joining in this sentiment, and being, in truth, somewhat uneasy at the admiration which his 'swell friend' excited.

'I'll see you hanged first, Eggy my boy! Go I won't, until these ladies have had their hair dressed: didn't you yourself tell me that Miss Crump's was the most beautiful hair in Europe? And do you think that I'll go away without seeing it? No, here I stay.'

'You naughty wicked odious provoking man!' said Miss Crump. But, at the same time, she took off her bonnet, and placed it on one of the side candlesticks of Mr. Eglantine's glass (it was a black velvet bonnet, trimmed with sham lace, and with a wreath of nasturtiums, convolvuluses, and wallflowers within), and then said, 'Give me the peignoir, Mr. Archibald, if you please;' and Eglantine, who would do anything for her when she called him Archibald, immediately produced

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that garment, and wrapped round the delicate shoulders of the lady, who, removing a sham gold chain which she wore on her forehead, two brass hair-combs set with glass rubies, and the comb which kept her back hair together—removing them, I say, and turning her great eyes towards the stranger, and giving her head a shake, down let tumble such a flood of shining waving heavy glossy jetty hair, as would have done Mr. Rowland's heart good to see. It tumbled down Miss Morgiana's back, and it tumbled over her shoulders, it tumbled over the chair on which she sat, and from the midst of it her jolly bright-eyed rosy face beamed out with a triumphant smile, which said, 'A'n't I now the most angelic being you ever saw?'

'By Heaven! it's the most beautiful thing I ever saw!' cried Mr. Walker, with undisguised admiration.

'*Isn't* it?' said Mrs. Crump, who made her daughter's triumph her own. 'Heigho! when I acted at "The Wells" in 1820, before that dear girl was born, *I* had such a head of hair as that, to a shade, sir, to a shade. They called me Ravenswing on account of it. I lost my head of hair when that dear child was born, and I often say to her, "Morgiana, you came into the world to rob your mother of her 'air." Were you ever at "The Wells," sir, in 1820? Perhaps you recollect Miss Delancy? I am that Miss Delancy. Perhaps you recollect,—

'"Tink-a-tink, tink-a-tink,
By the light of the star,
On the blue river's brink,
I heard a guitar.

"I heard a guitar,
On the blue waters clear,
And knew by its mu-usic,
That Selim was near!"

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You remember that in the "Bagdad Bells ! Fatima, Delancy; Selim, Benlomond (his real name was Bunnion: and he failed, poor fellow, in the public line afterwards). It was done to the tambourine and dancing between each verse,—

'"Tink-a-tink, tink-a-tink,
How the soft music swells,
And I hear the soft clink
Of the minaret bells!

"Tink-a———"'

'Oh!' here cried Miss Crump, as if in exceeding pain (and whether Mr. Eglantine had twitched, pulled, or hurt any one individual hair of that lovely head I don't know)—'Oh, you are killing me, Mr. Eglantine!'

And with this mamma, who was in her attitude, holding up the end of her boa as a visionary tambourine, and Mr. Walker, who was looking at her, and in his amusement at the mother's performances had almost forgotten the charms of the daughter—both turned round at once, and looked at her with many expressions of sympathy, while Eglantine, in a voice of reproach, said, '*Killed* you, Morgiana! I kill *you?*'

'I'm better now,' said the young lady, with a smile—'I'm better, Mr. Archibald, now.' And if the truth must be told, no greater coquette than Miss Morgiana existed in all Mayfair — no, not among the most fashionable mistresses of the fashionable valets who frequented the 'Bootjack.' She believed herself to be the most fascinating creature that the world ever produced; she never saw a stranger but she tried these fascinations upon him; and her charms of manner and person were of that showy sort which is most popular in this world, where people are wont to admire most that which gives them the least trouble to see; and so

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"Capting! Miss Crump's hair is to be seen and not touched if you please"

The Great Hoggarty Diamond—Page 172.

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you will find a tulip of a woman to be in fashion when a little humble violet or daisy of creation is passed over without remark. Morgiana was a tulip among women, and the tulip fanciers all came flocking round her.

Well, the said 'Oh!' and 'I'm better now, Mr. Archibald,' thereby succeeded in drawing everybody's attention to her lovely self. By the latter words Mr. Eglantine was specially inflamed; he glanced at Mr. Walker, and said, 'Capting! didn't I tell you she was a *creecher?* See her hair, sir: it's as black and as glossy as satting. It weighs fifteen pound, that hair, sir; and I wouldn't let my apprentice—that blundering Mossrose for instance (hang him!)—I wouldn't let any one but myself dress that hair for five hundred guineas! Ah, Miss Morgiana, remember that you *may always* have Eglantine to dress your hair!—remember that, that's all.' And with this the worthy gentleman began rubbing delicately a little of the Eglantinia into those ambrosial locks, which he loved with all the love of a man and an artist.

And as for Morgiana showing her hair, I hope none of my readers will entertain a bad opinion of the poor girl for doing so. Her locks were her pride; she acted at the private theatre 'hair parts,' where she could appear on purpose to show them in a dishevelled state; and that her modesty was real, and not affected, may be proved by the fact that when Mr. Walker, stepping up in the midst of Eglantine's last speech, took hold of a lock of her hair very gently with his hand, she cried 'Oh!' and started with all her might. And Mr. Eglantine observed very gravely, 'Capting! Miss Crump's hair is to be seen and not to be touched, if you please.'

'No more it is, Mr. Eglantine,' said her mamma. 'And now, as it's come to my turn, I beg the gentleman will be so obliging as to go.'

'*Must I?*' cried Mr. Walker; and as it was half-past six, and he was engaged to dinner at the 'Regent Club'

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and as he did not wish to make Eglantine jealous, who evidently was annoyed by his staying, he took his hat just as Miss Crump's coiffure was completed, and, saluting her and her mamma, left the room.

'A tip-top swell, I can assure you,' said Eglantine, nodding after him: 'a regular bang-up chap, and no *mistake*. Intimate with the Marquess of Billingsgate, and Lord Vauxhall, and that set.'

'He's very genteel,' said Mrs. Crump.

'Law! I'm sure I think nothing of him,' said Morgiana.

And Captain Walker walked towards his club, meditating on the beauties of Morgiana. 'What hair,' said he, 'what eyes the girl has! they're as big as billiard-balls; and five thousand pounds. Eglantine's in luck! five thousand pounds — she can't have it, it's impossible!'

No sooner was Mrs. Crump's front arranged, during the time of which operation Morgiana sat in perfect contentment looking at the last French fashions in the *Courrier des Dames*, and thinking how her pink satin slip would dye, and make just such a mantilla as that represented in the engraving—no sooner was Mrs. Crump's front arranged, than both ladies, taking leave of Mr. Eglantine, tripped back to the 'Bootjack Hotel' in the neighbourhood, where a very neat green fly was already in waiting, the gentleman on the box of which (from a livery-stable in the neighbourhood) gave a knowing touch to his hat, and a salute with his whip, to the two ladies, as they entered the tavern.

'Mr. W.'s inside,' said the man—a driver from Mr. Snaffle's establishment; 'he's been in and out this score of times, and looking down the street for you.' And in the house, in fact, was Mr. Woolsey, the tailor, who had hired the fly, and was engaged to conduct the ladies that evening to the play.

It was really rather too bad to think that Miss

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Morgiana, after going to one lover to have her hair dressed, should go with another to the play; but such is the way with lovely woman! Let her have a dozen admirers, and the dear coquette will exercise her power upon them all: and as a lady, when she has a large wardrobe, and a taste for variety in dress, will appear every day in a different costume, so will the young and giddy beauty wear her lovers, encouraging now the black whiskers, now smiling on the brown, now thinking that the gay smiling rattle of an admirer becomes her very well, and now adopting the sad sentimental melancholy one, according as her changeful fancy prompts her. Let us not be too angry with these uncertainties and caprices of beauty; and depend on it that, for the most part, those females who cry out loudest against the flightiness of their sisters, and rebuke their undue encouragement of this man or that, would do as much themselves if they had the chance, and are constant, as I am to my coat just now, because I have no other.

'Did you see Doubleyou, 'Gina dear?' said her mamma, addressing that young lady. 'He's in the bar with your pa, and has his military coat with the King's buttons, and looks like an officer.'

This was Mr. Woolsey's style, his great aim being to look like an army gent, for many of whom he in his capacity of tailor made those splendid red and blue coats which characterise our military. As for the royal button, had not he made a set of coats for his late Majesty, George IV.? and he would add, when he narrated this circumstance, 'Sir, Prince Blucher and Prince Swartzenberg's measure's in the house now; and what's more, I've cut for Wellington.' I believe he would have gone to St. Helena to make a coat for Napoleon, so great was his ardour. He wore a blue-black wig, and his whiskers were of the same hue. He was brief and stern in conversation; and he always went to masquerades and balls in a field-marshal's uniform.

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'He looks really quite the thing to-night,' continued Mrs. Crump.

'Yes,' said 'Gina; 'but he's such an odious wig, and the dye of his whiskers always comes off on his white gloves.'

'Everybody has not their own hair, love,' continued Mrs. Crump with a sigh; 'but Eglantine's is beautiful.'

'Every hairdresser's is,' answered Morgiana, rather contemptuously; 'but what I can't bear is that their fingers is always so very fat and pudgy.'

In fact, something had gone wrong with the fair Morgiana. Was it that she had but little liking for the one pretender or the other? Was it that young Glauber, who acted Romeo in the private theatricals, was far younger and more agreeable than either? Or was it, that seeing a *real gentleman*, such as Mr. Walker, with whom she had had her first interview, she felt more and more the want of refinement in her other declared admirers? Certain, however, it is, that she was very reserved all the evening, in spite of the attentions of Mr. Woolsey; that she repeatedly looked round at the box-door, as if she expected some one to enter; and that she partook of only a very few oysters, indeed, out of the barrel which the gallant tailor had sent down to the 'Bootjack,' and off which the party supped.

'What is it?' said Mr. Woolsey to his ally, Crump, as they sat together after the retirement of the ladies. 'She was dumb all night. She never once laughed at the farce, nor cried at the tragedy, and you know she laughs and cries uncommon. She only took half her negus, and not above a quarter of her beer.'

'No more she did!' replied Mr. Crump very calmly. 'I think it must be the barber as has been captivating her: he dressed her hair for the play.'

'Hang him, I'll shoot him!' said Mr. Woolsey. 'A fat foolish effeminate beast like that marry Miss Morgiana? Never; I *will* shoot him. I'll provoke

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him next Saturday—I'll tread on his toe—I'll pull his nose.'

'No quarrelling at the "Kidneys!"' answered Crump sternly; 'there shall be no quarrelling in that room as long as *I'm* in the chair!'

'Well, at any rate you'll stand my friend?'

'You know I will,' answered the other. 'You are honourable, and I like you better than Eglantine. I trust you more than Eglantine, sir. You're more of a man than Eglantine, though you *are* a tailor: and I wish with all my heart you may get Morgiana. Mrs. C. goes the other way, I know: but I tell you what, women will go their own ways, sir, and Morgy's like her mother in this point, and depend upon it, Morgy will decide for herself.'

Mr. Woolsey presently went home, still persisting in his plan for the assassination of Eglantine. Mr. Crump went to bed very quietly, and snored through the night in his usual tone. Mr. Eglantine passed some feverish moments of jealousy, for he had come down to the club in the evening, and had heard that Morgiana was gone to the play with his rival. And Miss Morgiana dreamed of a man who was—must we say it?—exceedingly like Captain Howard Walker. 'Mrs Captain So-and-so!' thought she. 'Oh, I do love a gentleman dearly!'

And about this time, too, Mr. Walker himself came rolling home from the 'Regent,' hiccupping. 'Such hair! such eyebrows!—such eyes! like b-b-billiard-balls, by Jove!'

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CHAPTER II

IN WHICH MR. WALKER MAKES THREE ATTEMPTS TO ASCERTAIN THE DWELLING OF MORGIANA

THE day after the dinner at the 'Regent Club,' Mr. Walker stepped over to the shop of his friend the perfumer, where, as usual, the young man, Mr. Mossrose, was established in the front premises.

For some reason or other, the Captain was particularly good-humoured; and, quite forgetful of the words which had passed between him and Mr. Eglantine's lieutenant the day before, began addressing the latter with extreme cordiality.

'A good morning to you, Mr. Mossrose,' said Captain Walker. 'Why, sir, you look as fresh as your namesake —you do, indeed, now, Mossrose.'

'You look ash yellow ash a guinea,' responded Mr. Mossrose sulkily. He thought the Captain was hoaxing him.

'My good sir,' replies the other, nothing cast down, 'I drank rather too freely last night.'

'The more beast you!' said Mr. Mossrose.

'Thank you, Mossrose; the same to you,' answered the Captain.

'If you call me a beast, I'll punch your head off!' answered the young man, who had much skill in the art which many of his brethren practise.

'I didn't, my fine fellow,' replied Walker. 'On the contrary, you——'

'Do you mean to give me the lie?' broke out the indignant Mossrose, who hated the agent fiercely, and did not in the least care to conceal his hate.

In fact, it was his fixed purpose to pick a quarrel with Walker, and to drive him, if possible, from Mr. Eglantine's

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shop. 'Do you mean to give me the lie, I say, Mr. Hooker Walker?'

'For Heaven's sake, Amos, hold your tongue!' exclaimed the Captain, to whom the name of Hooker was as poison; but at this moment a customer stepping in, Mr. Amos exchanged his ferocious aspect for a bland grin, and Mr. Walker walked into the studio.

When in Mr. Eglantine's presence, Walker, too, was all smiles in a minute, sank down on a settee, held out his hand to the perfumer, and began confidentially discoursing with him.

'*Such* a dinner, Tiny my boy,' said he; 'such prime fellows to eat it, too! Billingsgate, Vauxhall, Cinqbars, Buff of the Blues, and half-a-dozen more of the best fellows in town. And what do you think the dinner cost a head? I'll wager you'll never guess.'

'Was it two guineas a head?—In course I mean without wine,' said the genteel perfumer.

'Guess again!'

'Well, was it ten guineas a head? I'll guess any sum you please,' replied Mr. Eglantine: 'for I know that when you *nobs* are together, you don't spare your money. I myself, at the "Star and Garter" at Richmond once paid——'

'Eighteenpence?'

'Heighteenpence, sir!—I paid five-and-thirty shillings per 'ead. I'd have you to know that I can act as a gentleman as well as any other gentleman, sir,' answered the perfumer with much dignity.

'Well, eighteenpence was what *we* paid, and not a rap more, upon my honour.'

'Nonsense, you're joking. The Marquess of Billingsgate dine for eighteenpence! Why, hang it, if I was a marquess, I'd pay a five-pound note for my lunch.'

'You little know the person, Master Eglantine,' replied the Captain, with a smile of contemptuous superiority; 'you little know the real man of fashion,

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my good fellow. Simplicity, sir—simplicity's the characteristic of the real gentleman, and so I'll tell you what we had for dinner.'

'Turtle and venison, of course:—no nob dines without *them*.'

'Psha! we're sick of 'em! We had pea soup and boiled tripe! What do you think of *that*? We had sprats and herrings, a bullock's heart, a baked shoulder of mutton and potatoes, pig's-fry and Irish stew. *I* ordered the dinner, sir, and got more credit for inventing it than they ever gave to Ude or Soyer. The Marquess was in ecstasies, the Earl devoured half-a-bushel of sprats, and if the Viscount is not laid up with a surfeit of bullock's heart, my name's not Howard Walker. Billy, as I call him, was in the chair, and gave my health; and what do you think the rascal proposed?'

'What *did* his Lordship propose?'

'That every man present should subscribe twopence, and pay for my share of the dinner. By Jove! it is true, and the money was handed to me in a pewter-pot of which they also begged to make me a present. We afterwards went to Tom Spring's, from Tom's to the "Finish," from the "Finish" to the watch-house—that is, *they* did—and sent for me, just as I was getting into bed, to bail them all out.'

'They're happy dogs, those young noblemen,' said Mr. Eglantine; 'nothing but pleasure from morning till night; no affectation neither—no *hoture*; but manly downright straightforward good fellows.'

'Should you like to meet them, Tiny my boy?' said the Captain.

'If I did, sir, I hope I should show myself to be the gentleman,' answered Mr. Eglantine.

'Well, you *shall* meet them, and Lady Billingsgate shall order her perfumes at your shop. We are going to dine, next week, all our set, at Mealy-faced Bob's, and you shall be my guest,' cried the Captain, slapping the

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delighted artist on the back. 'And now, my boy, tell me how *you* spent the evening.'

'At my club, sir,' answered Mr. Eglantine, blushing rather.

'What! not at the play with the lovely black-eyed Miss —— What is her name, Eglantine?'

'Never mind her name, Captain,' replied Eglantine, partly from prudence and partly from shame. He had not the heart to own it was Crump, and he did not care that the Captain should know more of his destined bride.

'You wish to keep the five thousand to yourself—eh, you rogue?' responded the Captain, with a good-humoured air, although exceedingly mortified; for, to say the truth, he had put himself to the trouble of telling the above long story of the dinner, and of promising to introduce Eglantine to the lords, solely that he might elicit from that gentleman's good-humour some further particulars regarding the young lady with the billiard-ball eyes. It was for the very same reason, too, that he had made the attempt at reconciliation with Mr. Mossrose which had just so signally failed. Nor would the reader, did he know Mr. W. better, at all require to have the above explanation; but as yet we are only at the first chapter of his history, and who is to know what the hero's motives can be unless we take the trouble to explain?

Well, the little dignified answer of the worthy dealer in bergamot, '*Never mind her name, Captain!*' threw the gallant Captain quite aback; and though he sat for a quarter of an hour longer, and was exceedingly kind; and though he threw out some skilful hints, yet the perfumer was quite unconquerable; or, rather, he was too frightened to tell: the poor fat timid easy good-natured gentleman was always the prey of rogues,—panting and floundering in one rascal's snare or another's. He had the dissimulation, too, which timid men have; and felt the presence of a victimiser as a hare does of a

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greyhound. Now he would be quite still, now he would double, and now he would run, and then came the end. He knew, by his sure instinct of fear, that the Captain had, in asking these questions, a scheme against him, and so he was cautious, and trembled, and doubted. And oh! how he thanked his stars when Lady Grogmore's chariot drove up, with the Misses Grogmore, who wanted their hair dressed, and were going to a breakfast at three o'clock!

'I'll look in again, Tiny,' said the Captain, on hearing the summons.

'*Do*, Captain,' said the other: '*thank you*;' and went into the lady's studio with a heavy heart.

'Get out of the way, you infernal villain!' roared the Captain, with many oaths, to Lady Grogmore's large footman, with ruby-coloured tights, who was standing inhaling the ten thousand perfumes of the shop; and the latter, moving away in great terror, the gallant agent passed out, quite heedless of the grin of Mr. Mossrose.

Walker was in a fury at his want of success, and walked down Bond Street in a fury. 'I *will* know where the girl lives!' swore he. 'I'll spend a five-pound note, by Jove! rather than not know where she lives!'

'*That you would—I know you would!*' said a little grave low voice, all of a sudden, by his side. 'Pooh! what's money to you?'

Walker looked down: it was Tom Dale.

Who in London did not know little Tom Dale? He had cheeks like an apple, and his hair curled every morning, and a little blue stock, and always two new magazines under his arm, and an umbrella and a little brown frock coat, and big square-toed shoes with which he went *papping* down the street. He was everywhere at once. Everybody met him every day, and he knew everything that everybody ever did; though nobody ever knew what *he* did. He was, they say, a hundred years old, and had never dined at his own charge once in those

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hundred years. He looked like a figure out of a wax-work, with glassy clear meaningless eyes: he always spoke with a grin; he knew what you had for dinner the day before he met you, and what everybody had had for dinner for a century back almost. He was the receptacle of all the scandal of all the world, from Bond Street to Bread Street; he knew all the authors, all the actors, all the 'notorieties' of the town, and the private histories of each. That is, he never knew anything really, but supplied deficiencies of truth and memory with ready-coined, never-failing lies. He was the most benevolent man in the universe, and never saw you without telling you everything most cruel of your neighbour, and when he left you he went to do the same kind turn by yourself.

'Pooh! what's money to you, my dear boy?' said little Tom Dale, who had just come out of Ebers's, where he had been filching an opera-ticket. 'You make it in bushels in the City, you know you do—in thousands. *I* saw you go into Eglantine's. Fine business that; finest in London. Five-shilling cakes of soap, my dear boy. *I* can't wash with such. Thousands a year that man has made—hasn't he?'

'Upon my word, Tom, I don't know,' says the Captain.

'*You* not know? Don't tell me. You know everything—you agents. You *know* he makes five thousand a year—ay, and might make ten, but you know why he don't.'

'Indeed I don't.'

'Nonsense. Don't humbug a poor old fellow like me. Jews—Amos—fifty per cent., ay? Why can't he get his money from a good Christian?'

'I *have* heard something of that sort,' said Walker, laughing. 'Why, by Jove, Tom, you know everything!'

'*You* know everything, my dear boy. You know what a rascally trick that opera creature served him,

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poor fellow. Cashmere shawls—Storr and Mortimer's —"Star and Garter." Much better dine quiet off pea-soup and sprats—ay? His betters have, as you know very well.'

'Pea-soup and sprats! What? have you heard of that already?'

'Who bailed Lord Billingsgate, hey, you rogue?' and here Tom gave a knowing and almost demoniacal grin. 'Who wouldn't go to the "Finish?" Who had the piece of plate presented to him filled with sovereigns? And you deserved it, my dear boy—you deserved it. They said it was only halfpence, but *I* know better!' and here Tom went off in a cough.

'I say, Tom,' cried Walker, inspired with a sudden thought, 'you, who know everything, and are a theatrical man, did you ever know a Miss Delancy, an actress?'

'At "Sadler's Wells" in '16? Of course I did. Real name was Budge. Lord Slapper admired her very much, my dear boy. She married a man by the name of Crump, his Lordship's black footman, and brought him five thousand pounds; and they keep the "Bootjack" public-house in Bunker's Buildings, and they've got fourteen children. Is one of them handsome, eh, you sly rogue—and is it that which you will give five pounds to know? God bless you, my dear dear boy. Jones, my dear friend, how are you?'

And now, seizing on Jones, Tom Dale left Mr. Walker alone, and proceeded to pour into Mr. Jones's ear an account of the individual whom he had just quitted; how he was the best fellow in the world, and Jones *knew* it; how he was in a fine way of making his fortune; how he had been in the Fleet many times, and how he was at this moment employed in looking out for a young lady of whom a certain great marquess (whom Jones knew very well, too) had expressed an admiration.

But for these observations, which he did not hear, Captain Walker, it may be pronounced, did not care.

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His eyes brightened up, he marched quickly and gaily away; and turning into his own chambers opposite Eglantine's shop, saluted that establishment with a grin of triumph. 'You wouldn't tell me her name, wouldn't you?' said Mr. Walker. 'Well, the luck's with me now, and here goes.'

Two days after, as Mr. Eglantine, with white gloves and a case of eau-de-Cologne as a present in his pocket, arrived at the 'Bootjack Hotel,' Little Bunker's Buildings, Berkeley Square (for it must out—that was the place in which Mr. Crump's inn was situated), he paused for a moment at the threshold of the little house of entertainment, and listened, with beating heart, to the sound of delicious music that a well-known voice was uttering within.

The moon was playing in silvery brightness down the gutter of the humble street. A 'helper' rubbing down one of Lady Smigsmag's carriage-horses, even paused in his whistle to listen to the strain. Mr. Tressle's man, who had been professionally occupied, ceased his tap-tap upon the coffin which he was getting in readiness. The greengrocer (there is always a greengrocer in those narrow streets, and he goes out in white Berlin gloves as a supernumerary footman) was standing charmed at his little green gate; the cobbler (there is always a cobbler too) was drunk, as usual of evenings, but, with unusual subordination, never sang except when the *refrain* of the ditty arrived, when he hiccupped it forth with tipsy loyalty; and Eglantine leaned against the chequers painted on the door-side under the name of Crump, and looked at the red illumined curtain of the bar, and the vast well-known shadow of Mrs. Crump's turban within. Now and again the shadow of that worthy matron's hand would be seen to grasp the shadow of a bottle; then the shadow of a cup would rise towards the turban, and still the strain proceeded. Eglantine, I say, took out his yellow bandanna, and brushed the beady drops

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from his brow, and laid the contents of his white kids on his heart, and sighed with ecstatic sympathy. The song began,—

'Come to the greenwood tree,*
Come where the dark woods be,
Dearest, O come with me!
Let us rove—O my love—O my love!
O my-y love!
(*Drunken Cobbler without*)— O my-y love!'

'Beast!' says Eglantine.

'Come—'tis the moonlight hour,
Dew is on leaf and flower,
Come to the linden bower,—
Let us rove—O my love—O my love!
Let us ro-o-ove, lurlurliety; yes, we'll rove, lurlurliety,
Through the gro-o-ove, lurlurliety—lurlurli-e-i-e-i-e-i!
(*Cobbler as usual*)— Let us ro-o-ove,' &c.

'*You* here?' says another individual, coming clinking up the street, in a military-cut dress-coat, the buttons whereof shone very bright in the moonlight. '*You* here, Eglantine?—You're always here.'

'Hush, Woolsey,' said Mr. Eglantine to his rival the tailor (for he was the individual in question); and Woolsey, accordingly, put his back against the opposite door-post and chequers, so that (with poor Eglantine's bulk) nothing much thicker than a sheet of paper could pass out or in. And thus these two amorous caryatides kept guard as the song continued:—

'Dark is the wood, and wide,
Dangers, they say, betide:
But, at my Albert's side,
Nought I fear, O my love—O my love!

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'Welcome the greenwood tree,
Welcome the forest tree,
Dearest with thee, with thee,
Nought I fear, O my love—O ma-a-y love!'

Eglantine's fine eyes were filled with tears as Morgiana passionately uttered the above beautiful words. Little Woolsey's eyes glistened, as he clenched his fist with an oath, and said, 'Show me any singing that can beat *that*. Cobbler, shut your mouth, or I'll break your head!'

But the cobbler, regardless of the threat, continued to perform the 'Lurlurliety' with great accuracy; and when that was ended, both on his part and Morgiana's, a rapturous knocking of glasses was heard in the little bar, then a great clapping of hands, and finally somebody shouted '*Brava!*'

'Brava!'

At that word Eglantine turned deadly pale, then gave a start, then a rush forward, which pinned, or rather cushioned, the tailor against the wall; then twisting himself abruptly round, he sprang to the door of the bar, and bounced into that apartment.

'*How are you, my nosegay?*' exclaimed the same voice which had shouted 'Brava!' It was that of Captain Walker.

At ten o'clock the next morning, a gentleman, with the King's button on his military coat, walked abruptly into Mr. Eglantine's shop, and, turning on Mr. Mossrose, said, 'Tell your master I want to see him.'

'He's in his studio,' said Mr. Mossrose.

'Well, then, fellow, go and fetch him!'

And Mossrose, thinking it must be the Lord Chamberlain, or Doctor Prætorius at least, walked into the studio, where the perfumer was seated in a very glossy old silk dressing-gown, his fair hair hanging over his white face, his double chin over his flaccid whity-brown shirt-collar, his pea-green slippers on the hob, and

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on the fire the pot of chocolate which was simmering for his breakfast. A lazier fellow than poor Eglantine it would be hard to find; whereas, on the contrary, Woolsey was always up and brushed, spick-and-span, at seven o'clock; and had gone through his books, and given out the work for the journeymen, and eaten a hearty breakfast of rashers of bacon, before Eglantine had put the usual pound of grease to his hair (his fingers were always as damp and shiny as if he had them in a pomatum pot), and arranged his figure for the day.

'Here's a gent wants you in the shop,' say Mr. Mossrose, leaving the door of communication wide open.

'Say I'm in bed, Mr. Mossrose; I'm out of sperrets, and really can see nobody.'

'It's some one from Vindsor, I think; he's got the royal button,' says Mossrose.

'It's me—Woolsey,' shouted the little man from the shop.

Mr. Eglantine at this jumped up, made a rush to the door leading to his private apartment, and disappeared in a twinkling. But it must not be imagined that he fled in order to avoid Mr. Woolsey. He only went away for one minute just to put on his belt, for he was ashamed to be seen without it by his rival.

This being assumed, and his toilet somewhat arranged, Mr. Woolsey was admitted into his private room. And Mossrose would have heard every word of the conversation between those two gentlemen, had not Woolsey, opening the door, suddenly pounced on the assistant, taken him by the collar, and told him to disappear altogether into the shop: which Mossrose did; vowing he would have his revenge.

The subject on which Woolsey had come to treat was an important one. 'Mr. Eglantine,' says he, 'there's no use disguising from one another that we are both of us in love with Miss Morgiana, and that our chances up to this time have been pretty equal. But

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that Captain whom you introduced, like an ass as you were——'

'An ass, Mr. Woolsey! I'd have you to know, sir, that I'm no more a hass than you are, sir; and as for introducing the Captain, I did no such thing.'

'Well, well, he's got a-poaching into our preserves somehow. He's evidently sweet upon the young woman, and is a more fashionable chap than either of us two. We must get him out of the house, sir—we must circumwent him; and *then*, Mr. Eglantine, will be time enough for you and me to try which is the best man.'

'*He* the best man!' thought Eglantine; 'the little bald unsightly tailor creature! A man with no more soul than his smoothing-hiron!' The perfumer, as may be imagined, did not utter this sentiment aloud, but expressed himself quite willing to enter into any *hamicable* arrangement by which the new candidate for Miss Crump's favour must be thrown over. It was accordingly agreed between the two gentlemen that they should coalesce against the common enemy; that they should, by reciting many perfectly well-founded stories in the Captain's disfavour, influence the minds of Miss Crump's parents, and of herself, if possible, against this wolf in sheep's clothing; and that, when they were once fairly rid of him, each should be at liberty, as before, to prefer his own claim.

'I have thought of a subject,' said the little tailor, turning very red, and hemming and hawing a great deal. 'I've thought, I say, of a pint, which may be resorted to with advantage at the present juncture, and in which each of us may be useful to the other. An exchange, Mr. Eglantine: do you take?'

'Do you mean an accommodation-bill?' said Eglantine, whose mind ran a good deal on that species of exchange.

'Pooh, nonsense, sir! The name of *our* firm is, I

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flatter myself, a little more up in the market than some other people's names.'

'Do you mean to insult the name of Archibald Eglantine, sir? I'd have you to know that at three months——'

'Nonsense!' says Mr. Woolsey, mastering his emotion. 'There's no use a-quarrelling, Mr. E.: we're not in love with each other, I know that. You wish me hanged, or as good, I know that!'

'Indeed I don't, sir!'

'You do, sir; I tell you, you do! and what's more, I wish the same to you—transported, at any rate! But as two sailors, when a boat's a-sinking, though they hate each other ever so much, will help and bale the boat out; so, sir, let *us* act: let us be the two sailors.'

'Bail, sir?' said Eglantine, as usual mistaking the drift of the argument. 'I'll bail no man! If you're in difficulties, I think you had better go to your senior partner, Mr. Woolsey.' And Eglantine's cowardly little soul was filled with a savage satisfaction to think that his enemy was in distress, and actually obliged to come to *him* for succour.

'You're enough to make Job swear, you great fat stupid lazy old barber!' roared Mr. Woolsey, in a fury.

Eglantine jumped up and made for the bell-rope. The gallant little tailor laughed.

'There's no need to call in Betsy,' said he. 'I'm not a-going to eat you, Eglantine; you're a bigger man than me: if you were just to fall on me, you'd smother me! Just sit still on the sofa and listen to reason.'

'Well, sir, pro-ceed,' said the barber, with a gasp.

'Now, listen! What's the darling wish of your heart? I know it, sir! you've told it to Mr. Tressle, sir, and other gents at the club. The darling wish of your heart, sir, is to have a slap-up coat turned out of the *ateliers* of Messrs. Linsey, Woolsey & Company.

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You said you'd give twenty guineas for one of our coats, you know you did! Lord Bolsterton's a fatter man than you, and look what a figure we turn *him* out. Can any firm in England dress Lord Bolsterton but us, so as to make his Lordship look decent? I defy 'em, sir! We could have given Daniel Lambert a figure!'

'If I want a coat, sir,' said Mr. Eglantine, 'and I don't deny it, there's some people want *a head of hair!*'

'That's the very point I was coming to,' said the tailor, resuming the violent blush which was mentioned as having suffused his countenance at the beginning of the conversation. 'Let us have terms of mutual accommodation. Make me a wig, Mr. Eglantine, and though I never yet cut a yard of cloth except for a gentleman, I'll pledge you my word I'll make you a coat.'

'*Will* you, honour bright?' says Eglantine.

'Honour bright,' says the tailor. 'Look!' and in an instant he drew from his pocket one of those slips of parchment which gentlemen of his profession carry, and putting Eglantine into the proper position, began to take the preliminary observations. He felt Eglantine's heart thump with happiness as his measure passed over that soft part of the perfumer's person.

Then pulling down the window-blind, and looking that the door was locked, and blushing still more deeply than ever, the tailor seated himself in an arm-chair towards which Mr. Eglantine beckoned him, and, taking off his black wig, exposed his head to the great perruquier's gaze. Mr. Eglantine looked at it, measured it, manipulated it, sat for three minutes with his head in his hand and his elbow on his knee, gazing at the tailor's cranium with all his might, walked round it twice or thrice, and then said, 'It's enough, Mr. Woolsey. Consider the job as done. And now, sir,' said he, with a greatly relieved air—'and now, Woolsey, let us 'ave a glass of Curaçoa to celebrate this hauspicious meeting.'

The tailor, however, stiffly replied that he never drank

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in a morning, and left the room without offering to shake Mr. Eglantine by the hand: for he despised that gentleman very heartily, and himself, too, for coming to any compromise with him, and for so far demeaning himself as to make a coat for a barber.

Looking from his chambers on the other side of the street, that inevitable Mr. Walker saw the tailor issuing from the perfumer's shop, and was at no loss to guess that something extraordinary must be in progress when two such bitter enemies met together.

CHAPTER III

WHAT CAME OF MR. WALKER'S DISCOVERY OF THE 'BOOTJACK.'

It is very easy to state how the Captain came to take up that proud position at the 'Bootjack' which we have seen him occupy on the evening when the sound of the fatal 'Brava!' so astonished Mr. Eglantine.

The mere entry into the establishment was, of course, not difficult. Any person by simply uttering the words 'A pint of beer,' was free of the 'Bootjack;' and it was some such watchword that Howard Walker employed when he made his first appearance. He requested to be shown into a parlour where he might repose himself for a while, and was ushered into that very *sanctum* where the 'Kidney Club' met. Then he stated that the beer was the best he had ever tasted, except in Bavaria, and in some parts of Spain, he added; and, professing to be extremely 'peckish,' requested to know if there were any cold meat in the house whereof he could make a dinner.

'I don't usually dine at this hour, landlord,' said he, flinging down a half-sovereign for payment of the beer; 'but your parlour looks so comfortable, and the Windsor

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chairs are so snug, that I'm sure I could not dine better at the first club in London.'

'*One* of the first clubs in London is held in this very room,' said Mr. Crump, very well pleased: 'and attended by some of the best gents in town, too. We call it the "Kidney Club."'

'Why, bless my soul! it is the very club my friend Eglantine has so often talked to me about, and attended by some of the tip-top tradesmen of the metropolis!'

'There's better men here than Mr. Eglantine,' replied Mr. Crump, 'though he's a good man—I don't say he's not a good man—but there's better. Mr. Clinker, sir; Mr. Woolsey, of the house of Linsey, Woolsey & Co.——'

'The great army-clothiers!' cried Walker; 'the first house in town!' and so continued, with exceeding urbanity, holding conversation with Mr. Crump, until the honest landlord retired delighted, and told Mrs. Crump in the bar that there was a tip-top swell in the 'Kidney' parlour, who was a-going to have his dinner there.

Fortune favoured the brave Captain in every way. It was just Mr. Crump's own dinner-hour; and on Mrs. Crump stepping into the parlour to ask the guest whether he would like a slice off the joint to which the family were about to sit down, fancy that lady's start of astonishment at recognising Mr. Eglantine's facetious friend of the day before. The Captain at once demanded permission to partake of the joint at the family table; the lady could not with any great reason deny this request; the Captain was inducted into the bar; and Miss Crump, who always came down late for dinner, was even more astonished than her mamma on beholding the occupier of the fourth place at the table. Had she expected to see the fascinating stranger so soon again? I think she had. Her big eyes said as much, as, furtively looking up at Mr. Walker's face, they caught his looks;

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and then bouncing down again towards her plate, pretended to be very busy in looking at the boiled beef and carrots there displayed. She blushed far redder than those carrots, but her shining ringlets hid her confusion together with her lovely face.

Sweet Morgiana! the billiard-ball eyes had a tremendous effect on the Captain. They fell plump, as it were, into the pocket of his heart; and he gallantly proposed to treat the company to a bottle of champagne, which was accepted without much difficulty.

Mr. Crump, under pretence of going to the cellar (where he said he had some cases of the finest champagne in Europe), called Dick, the boy, to him, and despatched him with all speed to a wine merchant's, where a couple of bottles of the liquor were procured.

'Bring up two bottles, Mr. C.,' Captain Walker gallantly said when Crump made his move, as it were, to the cellar; and it may be imagined after the two bottles were drunk (of which Mrs. Crump took at least nine glasses to her share), how happy, merry, and confidential the whole party had become. Crump told his story of the 'Bootjack,' and whose boot it had drawn; the former Miss Delancy expatiated on her past theatrical life, and the pictures hanging round the room. Miss was equally communicative: and, in short, the Captain had all the secrets of the little family in his possession ere sunset. He knew that Miss cared little for either of her suitors, about whom mamma and papa had a little quarrel. He heard Mrs. Crump talk of Morgiana's property, and fell more in love with her than ever. Then came tea, the luscious crumpet, the quiet game at cribbage, and the song—the song which poor Eglantine heard, and which caused Woolsey's rage and his despair.

At the close of the evening the tailor was in a greater rage, and the perfumer in greater despair than ever. He had made his little present of eau-de-Cologne. 'Oh

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fie!' says the Captain, with a horse-laugh, 'it *smells of the shop!*' He taunted the tailor about his wig, and the honest fellow had only an oath to give by way of repartee. He told his stories about his club and his lordly friends. What chance had either against the all-accomplished Howard Walker?

Old Crump, with a good innate sense of right and wrong, hated the man; Mrs. Crump did not feel quite at her ease regarding him; but Morgiana thought him the most delightful person the world ever produced.

Eglantine's usual morning costume was a blue satin neckcloth embroidered with butterflies and ornamented with a brandy-ball brooch, a light shawl waistcoat, and a rhubarb-coloured coat of the sort which, I believe, are called Taglionis, and which have no waist-buttons, and made a pretence, as it were, to have no waists, but are in reality adopted by the fat in order to give them a waist. Nothing easier for an obese man than to have a waist; he has but to pinch his middle part a little, and the very fat on either side pushed violently forward *makes* a waist as it were, and our worthy perfumer's figure was that of a bolster cut almost in two with a string.

Walker presently saw him at his shop-door grinning in this costume, twiddling his ringlets with his dumpy greasy fingers, glittering with oil and rings, and looking so exceedingly contented and happy that the estate-agent felt assured some very satisfactory conspiracy had been planned between the tailor and him. How was Mr. Walker to learn what the scheme was? Alas! the poor fellow's vanity and delight were such, that he could not keep silent as to the cause of his satisfaction; and rather than not mention it at all, in the fulness of his heart he would have told his secret to Mr. Mossrose himself.

'When I get my coat,' thought the Bond Street Alnaschar, 'I'll hire of Snaffle that easy-going cream-

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coloured 'oss that he bought from Astley's, and I'll canter through the Park, and *won't* I pass through Little Bunker's Buildings, that's all? I'll wear my grey trousers with the velvet stripe down the side, and get my spurs lacquered up, and a French polish to my boot; and if I don't *do* for the Captain, and the tailor too, my name's not Archibald. And I know what I'll do: I'll hire the small clarence, and invite the Crumps to dinner at the "Gar and Starter"' (this was his facetious way of calling the 'Star and Garter'), 'and I'll ride by them all the way to Richmond. It's rather a long ride, but with Snaffle's soft saddle I can do it pretty easy, I dare say.' And so the honest fellow built castles upon castles in the air; and the last most beautiful vision of all was Miss Crump 'in white satting, with a horange-flower in her 'air,' putting him in possession of 'her lovely 'and before the haltar of St. George's, 'Anover Square.' As for Woolsey, Eglantine determined that he should have the best wig his art could produce; for he had not the least fear of his rival.

These points then being arranged to the poor fellow's satisfaction, what does he do but send out for half-a-quire of pink note-paper, and in a filagree envelope despatch a note of invitation to the ladies at the 'Bootjack:'—

'Bower of Bloom, Bond Street,
'*Thursday*.

'Mr Archibald Eglantine presents his compliments to Mrs. and Miss Crump, and requests the *honour and pleasure* of their company at the "Star and Garter" at Richmond to an early dinner on Sunday next.

'*If agreeable*, Mr. Eglantine's carriage will be at your door at three o'clock, and I propose to accompany them on horseback, if agreeable likewise.'

This note was sealed with yellow wax, and sent to its destination; and of course Mr. Eglantine went himself

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for the answer in the evening: and of course he told the ladies to look out for a certain new coat he was going to sport on Sunday; and of course Mr. Walker happens to call the next day with spare tickets for Mrs. Crump and her daughter, when the whole secret was laid bare to him—how the ladies were going to Richmond on Sunday in Mr. Snaffle's clarence, and how Mr. Eglantine was to ride by their side.

Mr. Walker did not keep horses of his own; his magnificent friends at the 'Regent' had plenty in their stables, and some of these were at livery at the establishment of the Captain's old 'college' companion, Mr. Snaffle. It was easy, therefore, for the Captain to renew his acquaintance with that individual. So, hanging on the arm of my Lord Vauxhall, Captain Walker next day made his appearance at Snaffle's livery stables, and looked at the various horses there for sale or at bait, and soon managed, by putting some facetious questions to Mr. Snaffle regarding the 'Kidney Club,' &c., to place himself on a friendly footing with that gentleman, and to learn from him what horse Mr. Eglantine was to ride on Sunday.

The monster Walker had fully determined in his mind that Eglantine should *fall off* that horse in the course of his Sunday's ride.

'That sing'lar hanimal,' said Mr. Snaffle, pointing to the old horse, 'is the celebrated Hemperor that was the wonder of Hastley's some years back, and was parted with by Mr. Ducrow honly because his feelin's wouldn't allow him to keep him no longer after the death of the first Mrs. D., who invariably rode him. I bought him, thinking that p'raps ladies and Cockney bucks might like to ride him (for his haction is wonderful, and he canters like a harm-chair); but he's not safe on any day except Sundays.

'And why's that?' asked Captain Walker. 'Why is he safer on Sundays than other days?'

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'*Because there's no music* in the streets on Sundays. The first gent that rode him found himself dancing a quadrille in Hupper Brook Street to an 'urdy-gurdy that was playing "Cherry Ripe," such is the natur of the hanimal. And if you reklect the play of the "Battle of Hoysterlitz," in which Mrs. D. hacted "the female hussar," you may remember how she and the horse died in the third act to the toon of "God preserve the Emperor," from which this horse took his name. Only play that toon to him, and he rears hisself up, beats the hair in time with his forelegs, and then sinks gently to the ground as though he were carried off by a cannon-ball. He served a lady hopposite Hapsley 'Ouse so one day, and since then I've never let him out to a friend except on Sunday, when, in course, there's no danger. Heglantine *is* a friend of mine, and of course I wouldn't put the poor fellow on a hanimal I couldn't trust.'

After a little more conversation, my lord and his friend quitted Mr. Snaffle's, and as they walked away towards the 'Regent,' his Lordship might be heard shrieking with laughter, crying, 'Capital, by jingo! exthlent! Dwive down in the dwag! Take Lungly. Worth a thousand pound, by Jove!' and similar ejaculations, indicative of exceeding delight.

On Saturday morning, at ten o'clock to a moment, Mr. Woolsey called at Mr. Eglantine's with a yellow handkerchief under his arm. It contained the best and handsomest body-coat that ever gentleman put on. It fitted Eglantine to a nicety—it did not pinch him in the least, and yet it was of so exquisite a cut that the perfumer found, as he gazed delighted in the glass, that he looked like a manly portly high-bred gentleman—a lieutenant-colonel in the army at the very least.

'You're a full man, Eglantine,' said the tailor, delighted, too, with his own work; 'but that can't be helped. You look more like Hercules than Falstaff now, sir; and if a coat can make a gentleman, a gentle-

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man you are. Let me recommend you to sink the blue cravat, and take the stripes off your trousers. Dress quiet, sir; draw it mild. Plain waistcoat, dark trousers, black neckcloth, black hat, and if there's a better-dressed man in Europe to-morrow, I'm a Dutchman.'

'Thank you, Woolsey—thank you, my dear sir,' said the charmed perfumer. 'And now I'll just trouble you to try on this here.'

The wig had been made with equal skill; it was not in the florid style which Mr. Eglantine loved in his own person, but, as the perfumer said, a simple straightforward head of hair.

'It seems as if it had grown there all your life, Mr. Woolsey; nobody would tell that it was not your nat'ral colour' (Mr. Woolsey blushed)—'it makes you look ten year younger; and as for that scarecrow yonder, you'll never, I think, want to wear that again.'

Woolsey looked in the glass, and was delighted too. The two rivals shook hands and straightway became friends, and in the overflowing of his heart the perfumer mentioned to the tailor the party which he had arranged for the next day, and offered him a seat in the carriage and at the dinner at the 'Star and Garter.' 'Would you like to ride?' said Eglantine, with rather a consequential air. 'Snaffle will mount you, and we can go one on each side of the ladies, if you like.'

But Woolsey humbly said he was not a riding man, and gladly consented to take a place in the clarence carriage, provided he was allowed to bear half the expenses of the entertainment. This proposal was agreed to by Mr. Eglantine, and the two gentlemen parted, to meet once more at the 'Kidneys' that night, when everybody was edified by the friendly tone adopted between them.

Mr. Snaffle, at the club meeting, made the very same proposal to Mr. Woolsey that the perfumer had made; and stated that as Eglantine was going to ride Hemperor, Woolsey, at least, ought to mount too. But he was

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met by the same modest refusal on the tailor's part, who stated that he had never mounted a horse yet, and preferred greatly the use of a coach.

Eglantine's character as a 'swell' rose greatly with the club that evening.

Two o'clock on Sunday came: the two beaux arrived punctually at the door to receive the two smiling ladies.

'Bless us, Mr. Eglantine!' said Miss Crump, quite struck by him, 'I never saw you look so handsome in your life.' He could have flung his arms around her neck at the compliment. 'And law, ma! what has happened to Mr. Woolsey? doesn't he look ten years younger than yesterday?' Mamma assented, and Woolsey bowed gallantly, and the two gentlemen exchanged a nod of hearty friendship.

The day was delightful. Eglantine pranced along magnificently on his cantering arm-chair, with his hat on one ear, his left hand on his side, and his head flung over his shoulder, and throwing under-glances at Morgiana whenever the 'Emperor' was in advance of the clarence. The 'Emperor' pricked up his ears a little uneasily passing the Ebenezer chapel in Richmond, where the congregation were singing a hymn, but beyond this no accident occurred; nor was Mr. Eglantine in the least stiff or fatigued by the time the party reached Richmond, where he arrived time enough to give his steed into the charge of an ostler, and to present his elbow to the ladies as they alighted from the clarence carriage.

What this jovial party ate for dinner at the 'Star and Garter' need not here be set down. If they did not drink champagne I am very much mistaken. They were as merry as any four people in Christendom; and between the bewildering attentions of the perfumer, and the manly courtesy of the tailor, Morgiana very likely forgot the gallant Captain, or, at least, was very happy in his absence.

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At eight o'clock they began to drive homewards. '*Won't* you come into the carriage?' said Morgiana to Eglantine, with one of her tenderest looks; 'Dick can ride the horse.' But Archibald was too great a lover of equestrian exercise. 'I'm afraid to trust anybody on this horse,' said he with a knowing look; and so he pranced away by the side of the little carriage. The moon was brilliant, and, with the aid of the gas-lamps, illuminated the whole face of the country in a way inexpressibly lovely.

Presently, in the distance, the sweet and plaintive notes of a bugle were heard, and the performer, with great delicacy, executed a religious air. 'Music, too! heavenly!' said Morgiana, throwing up her eyes to the stars. The music came nearer and nearer, and the delight of the company was only more intense. The fly was going at about four miles an hour, and the 'Emperor' began cantering to time at the same rapid pace.

'This must be some gallantry of yours, Mr. Woolsey,' said the romantic Morgiana, turning upon that gentleman. 'Mr. Eglantine treated us to the dinner, and you have provided us with the music.'

Now Woolsey had been a little, a very little, dissatisfied during the course of the evening's entertainment, by fancying that Eglantine, a much more voluble person than himself, had obtained rather an undue share of the ladies' favour; and as he himself paid half of the expenses, he felt very much vexed to think that the perfumer should take all the credit of the business to himself. So when Miss Crump asked if he had provided the music, he foolishly made an evasive reply to her query, and rather wished her to imagine that he *had* performed that piece of gallantry. 'If it pleases *you*, Miss Morgiana,' said this artful Schneider, 'what more need any man ask? wouldn't I have all Drury Lane orchestra to please you?'

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The bugle had by this time arrived quite close to the clarence carriage, and if Morgiana had looked round she might have seen whence the music came. Behind her came slowly a drag, or private stage-coach, with four horses. Two grooms with cockades and folded arms were behind; and driving on the box, a little gentleman, with a blue bird's-eye neckcloth, and a white coat. A bugleman was by his side, who performed the melodies which so delighted Miss Crump. He played very gently and sweetly, and 'God save the King' trembled so softly out of the brazen orifice of his bugle, that the Crumps, the tailor, and Eglantine himself, who was riding close by the carriage, were quite charmed and subdued.

'Thank you, *dear* Mr. Woolsey,' said the grateful Morgiana; which made Eglantine stare, and Woolsey was just saying, 'Really, upon my word, I've nothing to do with it,' when the man on the drag-box said to the bugleman, 'Now!'

The bugleman began the tune of—

'Heaven preserve our Emperor Fra-an-cis.
Rum tum-ti-tum-ti-titty-ti.'

At the sound, the Emperor reared himself (with a roar from Mr. Eglantine)—reared and beat the air with his fore-paws. Eglantine flung his arms round the beast's neck; still he kept beating time with his fore-paws. Mrs. Crump screamed: Mr. Woolsey, Dick, the clarence coachman, Lord Vauxhall (for it was he), and his Lordship's two grooms, burst into a shout of laughter; Morgiana cries 'Mercy! mercy!' Eglantine yells 'Stop!'—'Wo!'—'Oh!' and a thousand ejaculations of hideous terror; until, at last, down drops the 'Emperor' stone dead in the middle of the road, as if carried off by a cannon-ball.

Fancy the situation, ye callous souls who laugh at

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the misery of humanity, fancy the situation of poor Eglantine under the 'Emperor!' He had fallen very easy, the animal lay perfectly quiet, and the perfumer was to all intents and purposes as dead as the animal. He had not fainted, but he was immovable with terror; he lay in a puddle, and thought it was his own blood gushing from him; and he would have lain there until Monday morning, if my Lord's grooms, descending, had not dragged him by the coat-collar from under the beast, who still lay quiet.

'Play "Charming Judy Callaghan," will ye?' says Mr. Snaffle's man, the fly-driver; on which the bugler performed that lively air, and up started the horse, and the grooms, who were rubbing Mr. Eglantine down against a lamp-post, invited him to remount.

But his heart was too broken for that. The ladies gladly made room for him in the clarence. Dick mounted 'Emperor' and rode homewards. The drag, too, drove away, playing 'Oh dear, what can the matter be?' and with a scowl of furious hate, Mr. Eglantine sat and regarded his rival. His pantaloons were split, and his coat torn up the back.

'Are you hurt much, dear Mr. Archibald?' said Morgiana, with unaffected compassion.

'N-not much,' said the poor fellow, ready to burst into tears.

'Oh, Mr. Woolsey,' added the good-natured girl, 'how could you play such a trick?'

'Upon my word,' Woolsey began, intending to plead innocence; but the ludicrousness of the situation was once more too much for him, and he burst out into a roar of laughter.

'You! you cowardly beast!' howled out Eglantine, now driven to fury—'*you* laugh at me, you miserable cretur! Take *that*, sir!' and he fell upon him with all his might, and well-nigh throttled the tailor, and pummelling his eyes, his nose, his ears, with inconceiv-

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able rapidity, wrenched, finally, his wig off his head, and flung it into the road.

Morgiana saw that Woolsey had red hair.*

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CHAPTER IV

IN WHICH THE HEROINE HAS A NUMBER MORE LOVERS, AND CUTS A VERY DASHING FIGURE IN THE WORLD

Two years have elapsed since the festival at Richmond, which, begun so peaceably, ended in such general uproar. Morgiana never could be brought to pardon Woolsey's red hair, nor to help laughing at Eglantine's disasters, nor could the two gentlemen be reconciled to one another. Woolsey, indeed, sent a challenge to the perfumer to meet him with pistols, which the latter declined, saying, justly, that tradesmen had no business with such weapons; on this the tailor proposed to meet him with coats off, and have it out like men, in the presence of their friends of the 'Kidney Club.' The perfumer said he would be party to no such vulgar transaction; on which, Woolsey, exasperated, made an oath that he would tweak the perfumer's nose so surely as he ever entered the club-room; and thus *one* member of the 'Kidneys' was compelled to vacate his arm-chair.

Woolsey himself attended every meeting regularly, but he did not evince that gaiety and good-humour which render men's company agreeable in clubs. On arriving, he would order the boy to 'tell him when that scoundrel Eglantine came;' and, hanging up his hat on a peg, would scowl round the room, and tuck up his sleeves very high, and stretch, and shake his fingers and

* A French *proverbe* furnished the author with the notion of the rivalry between the Barber and the Tailor.

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wrists, as if getting them ready for that pull of the nose which he intended to bestow upon his rival. So prepared, he would sit down and smoke his pipe quite silently, glaring at all, and jumping up, and hitching up his coat-sleeves, when any one entered the room.

The 'Kidneys' did not like this behaviour. Clinker ceased to come. Bustard, the poulterer, ceased to come. As for Snaffle, he also disappeared, for Woolsey wished to make him answerable for the misbehaviour of Eglantine, and proposed to him the duel which the latter had declined. So Snaffle went. Presently they all went, except the tailor and Tressle, who lived down the street, and these two would sit and puff their tobacco, one on each side of Crump, the landlord, as silent as Indian chiefs in a wigwam. There grew to be more and more room for poor old Crump in his chair and in his clothes; the 'Kidneys' were gone, and why should he remain? One Saturday he did not come down to preside at the club (as he still fondly called it), and the Saturday following Tressle had made a coffin for him; and Woolsey, with the undertaker by his side, followed to the grave the father of the 'Kidneys.'

Mrs. Crump was now alone in the world. 'How alone?' says some innocent and respected reader. Ah! my dear sir, do you know so little of human nature as not to be aware that, one week after the Richmond affair, Morgiana married Captain Walker? That did she privately, of course; and after the ceremony, came tripping back to her parents, as young people do in plays, and said, 'Forgive me, dear pa and ma, I'm married, and here is my husband the Captain!' Papa and mamma did forgive her, as why shouldn't they? and papa paid over her fortune to her, which she carried home delighted to the Captain. This happened several months before the demise of old Crump; and Mrs. Captain Walker was on the Continent with her Howard when that melancholy event took place; hence Mrs.

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Crump's loneliness and unprotected condition. Morgiana had not latterly seen much of the old people; how could she, moving in her exalted sphere, receive at her genteel new residence in the Edgware Road the old publican and his wife?

Being, then, alone in the world, Mrs. Crump could not abear, she said, to live in the house where she had been so respected and happy: so she sold the goodwill of the 'Bootjack,' and, with the money arising from this sale and her own private fortune, being able to muster some sixty pounds per annum, retired to the neighbourhood of her dear old 'Sadler's Wells,' where she boarded with one of Mrs. Serle's forty pupils. Her heart was broken, she said; but, nevertheless, about nine months after Mr. Crump's death, the wallflowers, nasturtiums, polyanthuses, and convolvuluses began to blossom under her bonnet as usual; in a year she was dressed quite as fine as ever, and now never missed 'The Wells,' or some other place of entertainment, one single night, but was as regular as the box-keeper. Nay, she was a buxom widow still, and an old flame of hers, Fisk, so celebrated as pantaloon in Grimaldi's time, but now doing the 'heavy fathers' at 'The Wells,' proposed to her to exchange her name for his.

But this proposal the worthy widow declined altogether. To say truth, she was exceedingly proud of her daughter, Mrs. Captain Walker. They did not see each other much at first; but every now and then Mrs. Crump would pay a visit to the folks in Connaught Square; and on the days when 'the Captain's' lady called in the City Road, there was not a single official at 'The Wells,' from the first tragedian down to the call-boy, who was not made aware of the fact.

It has been said that Morgiana carried home her fortune in her own reticule, and, smiling, placed the money in her husband's lap; and hence the reader may imagine, who knows Mr. Walker to be an extremely

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selfish fellow, that a great scene of anger must have taken place, and many coarse oaths and epithets of abuse must have come from him, when he found that five hundred pounds was all that his wife had, although he had expected five thousand with her. But, to say the truth, Walker was at this time almost in love with his handsome rosy good-humoured simple wife. They had made a fortnight's tour, during which they had been exceedingly happy; and there was something so frank and touching in the way in which the kind creature flung her all into his lap, saluting him with a hearty embrace at the same time, and wishing that it were a thousand billion billion times more, so that her darling Howard might enjoy it, that the man would have been a ruffian indeed could he have found it in his heart to be angry with her; and so he kissed her in return, and patted her on the shining ringlets, and then counted over the notes with rather a disconsolate air, and ended by locking them up in his portfolio. In fact, *she* had never deceived him; Eglantine had, and he in return had out-tricked Eglantine; and so warm were his affections for Morgiana at this time, that, upon my word and honour, I don't think he repented of his bargain. Besides, five hundred pounds in crisp bank-notes was a sum of money such as the Captain was not in the habit of handling every day; a dashing sanguine fellow, he fancied there was no end to it, and already thought of a dozen ways by which it should increase and multiply into a plum. Woe is me! Has not many a simple soul examined five new hundred-pound notes in this way, and calculated their powers of duration and multiplication?

This subject, however, is too painful to be dwelt on. Let us hear what Walker did with his money. Why, he furnished the house in the Edgware Road before mentioned, he ordered a handsome service of plate, he sported a phaeton and two ponies, he kept a couple of

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smart maids and a groom foot-boy—in fact, he mounted just such a neat unpretending gentleman-like establishment as becomes a respectable young couple on their outset in life. 'I've sown my wild oats,' he would say to his acquaintances; 'a few years since, perhaps, I would have longed to cut a dash, but now prudence is the word; and I've settled every farthing of Mrs. Walker's fifteen thousand on herself.' And the best proof that the world had confidence in him is the fact, that for the articles of plate, equipage, and furniture, which have been mentioned as being in his possession, he did not pay one single shilling; and so prudent was he, that but for turnpikes, postage-stamps, and king's taxes, he hardly had occasion to change a five-pound note of his wife's fortune.

To tell the truth, Mr. Walker had determined to make his fortune. And what is easier in London? Is not the share-market open to all? Do not Spanish and Columbian bonds rise and fall? For what are companies invented, but to place thousands in the pockets of shareholders and directors? Into these commercial pursuits the gallant Captain now plunged with great energy, and made some brilliant hits at first starting, and bought and sold so opportunely, that his name began to rise in the City as a capitalist, and might be seen in the printed list of directors of many excellent and philanthropic schemes, of which there is never any lack in London. Business to the amount of thousands was done at his agency; shares of vast value were bought and sold under his management. How poor Mr. Eglantine used to hate him and envy him, as from the door of his emporium (the firm was Eglantine & Mossrose now) he saw the Captain daily arrive in his pony-phaeton, and heard of the start he had taken in life.

The only regret Mrs. Walker had was that she did not enjoy enough of her husband's society. His business called him away all day; his business, too, obliged him

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to leave her of evenings very frequently alone; whilst he (always in pursuit of business) was dining with his great friends at the club, and drinking claret and champagne to the same end.

She was a perfectly good-natured and simple soul, and never made him a single reproach; but when he could pass an evening at home with her she was delighted, and when he could drive with her in the Park she was happy for a week after. On these occasions, and in the fulness of her heart, she would drive to her mother and tell her story. 'Howard drove with me in the Park yesterday, mamma;' 'Howard has promised to take me to the Opera,' and so forth. And that evening the manager, Mr. Gawler, the first tragedian, Mrs. Serle and her forty pupils, all the box-keepers, bonnet-women—nay, the ginger-beer girls themselves at 'The Wells,' knew that Captain and Mrs. Walker were at Kensington Gardens, or were to have the Marchioness of Billingsgate's box at the Opera. One night—O joy of joys!—Mrs. Captain Walker appeared in a private box at 'The Wells.' That's she with the black ringlets and Cashmere shawl, smelling-bottle, and black-velvet gown, and bird of paradise in her hat. Goodness gracious! how they all acted at her, Gawler and all, and how happy Mrs. Crump was! She kissed her daughter between all the acts, she nodded to all her friends on the stage, in the slips, or in the real water; she introduced her daughter, Mrs. Captain Walker, to the box-opener; and Melvil Delamere (the first comic), Canterfield (the tyrant), and Jonesini (the celebrated Fontarabian Statuesque), were all on the steps and shouted for Mrs. Captain Walker's carriage, and waved their hats, and bowed as the little pony-phaeton drove away. Walker, in his moustaches, had come in at the end of the play, and was not a little gratified by the compliments paid to himself and lady.

Among the other articles of luxury with which the Captain furnished his house we must not omit to mention

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an extremely grand piano, which occupied four-fifths of Mrs. Walker's little back drawing-room, and at which she was in the habit of practising continually. All day and all night during Walker's absences (and these occurred all night and all day), you might hear—the whole street might hear—the voice of the lady at No. 23, gurgling, and shaking, and quavering, as ladies do when they practise. The street did not approve of the continuance of the noise; but neighbours are difficult to please, and what would Morgiana have had to do if she had ceased to sing? It would be hard to lock a blackbird in a cage and prevent him from singing too. And so Walker's blackbird, in the snug little cage in the Edgware Road, sang and was not unhappy.

After the pair had been married for about a year, the omnibus that passes both by Mrs. Crump's house near 'The Wells,' and by Mrs. Walker's street off the Edgware Road, brought up the former-named lady almost every day to her daughter. She came when the Captain had gone to his business; she stayed to a two-o'clock dinner with Morgiana; she drove with her in the pony-carriage round the Park; but she never stopped later than six. Had she not to go to the play at seven? And, besides, the Captain *might* come home with some of his great friends, and he always swore and grumbled much if he found his mother-in-law on the premises. As for Morgiana, she was one of those women who encourage despotism in husbands. What the husband says must be right, because he says it; what he orders must be obeyed tremblingly. Mrs. Walker gave up her entire reason to her lord. Why was it? Before marriage she had been an independent little person; she had far more brains than her Howard. I think it must have been his moustaches that frightened her, and caused in her this humility.

Selfish husbands have this advantage in maintaining with easy-minded wives a rigid and inflexible behaviour,

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viz., that if they *do* by any chance grant a little favour, the ladies receive it with such transports of gratitude as they would never think of showing to a lord and master who was accustomed to give them everything they asked for; and hence, when Captain Walker signified his assent to his wife's prayer that she should take a singing-master she thought his generosity almost divine, and fell upon her mamma's neck, when that lady came the next day, and said what a dear adorable angel her Howard was, and what ought she not to do for a man who had taken her from her humble situation, and raised her to be what she was! What she was, poor soul! She was the wife of a swindling *parvenu* gentleman. She received visits from six ladies of her husband's acquaintances—two attorneys' ladies, his bill-broker's lady, and one or two more, of whose characters we had best, if you please, say nothing; and she thought it an honour to be so distinguished: as if Walker had been a Lord Exeter to marry a humble maiden, or a noble prince to fall in love with a humble Cinderella, or a majestic Jove to come down from heaven and woo a Semele. Look through the world, respectable reader, and among your honourable acquaintances, and say if this sort of faith in women is not very frequent? They *will* believe in their husbands, whatever the latter do. Let John be dull, ugly, vulgar, and a humbug, his Mary Ann never finds it out; let him tell his stories ever so many times, there is she always ready with her kind smile; let him be stingy, she says he is prudent; let him quarrel with his best friend, she says he is always in the right; let him be prodigal, she says he is generous, and that his health requires enjoyment; let him be idle, he must have relaxation; and she will pinch herself and her household that he may have a guinea for his club. Yes; and every morning, as she wakes and looks at the face, snoring on the pillow by her side—every morning, I say, she blesses that dull ugly countenance, and the dull ugly soul reposing there, and

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thinks both are something divine. I want to know how it is that women do not find out their husbands to be humbugs? Nature has so provided it, and thanks to her. When last year they were acting the 'Midsummer Night's Dream,' and all the boxes began to roar with great coarse hee-haws at Titania hugging Bottom's long long ears—to me, considering these things, it seemed that there were a hundred other male brutes squatted round about, and treated just as reasonably as Bottom was. Their Titanias lulled them to sleep in their laps, summoned a hundred smiling delicate household fairies to tickle their gross intellects and minister to their vulgar pleasures; and (as the above remarks are only supposed to apply to honest women loving their own lawful spouses) a mercy it is that no wicked Puck is in the way to open their eyes, and point out their folly. *Cui bono?* let them live on in their deceit: I know two lovely ladies who will read this, and will say it is just very likely, and not see in the least that it has been written regarding *them*.

Another point of sentiment, and one curious to speculate on. Have you not remarked the immense works of art that women get through? The worsted-work sofas, the counterpanes patched or knitted (but these are among the old-fashioned in the country), the bushels of pincushions, the albums they laboriously fill, the tremendous pieces of music they practise, the thousand other fiddle-faddles which occupy the attention of the dear souls—nay, have we not seen them seated of evenings in a squad or company, Louisa employed at the worsted-work before mentioned, Eliza at the pincushions, Amelia at card-racks or filigree matches, and, in the midst, Theodosia with one of the candles, reading out a novel aloud? Ah! my dear sir, mortal creatures must be very hard put to it for amusement, be sure of that, when they are forced to gather together in a company and hear novels read aloud! They only do it because

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they can't help it, depend upon it: it is a sad life, a poor pastime. Mr. Dickens, in his American book, tells of the prisoners at the silent prison, how they had ornamented their rooms, some of them with a frightful prettiness and elaboration. Women's fancy-work is of this sort often—only prison work, done because there was no other exercising-ground for their poor little thoughts and fingers: and hence these wonderful pincushions are executed, these counterpanes woven, these sonatas learned. By everything sentimental, when I see two kind innocent fresh-cheeked young women go to a piano, and sit down opposite to it upon two chairs piled with more or less music-books (according to their convenience), and, so seated, go through a set of double-barrelled variations upon this or that tune by Herz or Kalkbrenner—I say, far from receiving any satisfaction at the noise made by the performance, my too susceptible heart is given up entirely to bleeding for the performers. What hours, and weeks, nay, preparatory years of study, has that infernal jig cost them! What sums has papa paid, what scoldings has mamma administered ('Lady Bullblock does not play herself;' Sir Thomas says, 'but she has naturally the finest ear for music ever known!'); what evidences of slavery, in a word, are there! It is the condition of the young lady's existence. She breakfasts at eight, she does 'Mangnall's Questions' with the governess till ten, she practises till one, she walks in the square with bars round her till two, then she practises again, then she sews or hems, or reads French, or Hume's 'History,' then she comes down to play to papa, because he likes music whilst he is asleep after dinner, and then it is bedtime, and the morrow is another day with what are called the same 'duties' to be gone through. A friend of mine went to call at a nobleman's house the other day, and one of the young ladies of the house came into the room with a tray on her head; this tray was to give Lady Maria a graceful carriage. *Mon Dieu!* and

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who knows but at that moment Lady Bell was at work with a pair of her dumb namesakes, and Lady Sophy lying flat on a stretching-board? I could write whole articles on this theme; but peace! we are keeping Mrs. Walker waiting all the while.

Well, then, if the above disquisitions have anything to do with the story, as no doubt they have, I wish it to be understood that, during her husband's absence, and her own solitary confinement, Mrs. Howard Walker bestowed a prodigious quantity of her time and energy on the cultivation of her musical talent; and having, as before stated, a very fine loud voice, speedily attained no ordinary skill in the use of it. She first had for teacher little Podmore, the fat chorus-master at 'The Wells,' and who had taught her mother the 'Tink-a-tink' song which has been such a favourite since it first appeared. He grounded her well, and bade her eschew the singing of all those 'Eagle Tavern' ballads in which her heart formerly delighted; and when he had brought her to a certain point of skill, the honest little chorus-master said she should have a still better instructor, and wrote a note to Captain Walker (enclosing his own little account), speaking in terms of the most flattering encomium of his lady's progress, and recommending that she should take lessons of the celebrated Baroski. Captain Walker dismissed Podmore then, and engaged Signor Baroski, at a vast expense; as he did not fail to tell his wife. In fact, he owed Baroski no less than two hundred and twenty guineas when he was—— But we are advancing matters.

Little Baroski is the author of the opera of 'Eliogabalo,' of the oratorio of 'Purgatorio,' which made such an immense sensation, of songs and ballet-musics innumerable. He is a German by birth, and shows such an outrageous partiality for pork and sausages, and attends at church so constantly, that I am sure there cannot be any foundation in the story that he is a member of the

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ancient religion. He is a fat little man, with a hooked nose and jetty whiskers, and coal-black shining eyes, and plenty of rings and jewels on his fingers and about his person, and a very considerable portion of his shirt-sleeves turned over his coat to take the air. His great hands (which can sprawl over half a piano, and produce those effects on the instrument for which he is celebrated) are encased in lemon-coloured kids, new, or cleaned daily. Parenthetically, let us ask why so many men, with coarse red wrists and big hands, persist in the white kid glove and wristband system? Baroski's gloves alone must cost him a little fortune; only he says with a leer, when asked the question, 'Get along vid you; don't you know dere is a gloveress that lets me have dem very sheap?' He rides in the Park; has splendid lodgings in Dover Street; and is a member of the 'Regent Club,' where he is a great source of amusement to the members, to whom he tells astonishing stories of his successes with the ladies, and for whom he has always play and opera tickets in store. His eye glistens and his little heart beats when a lord speaks to him; and he has been known to spend large sums of money in giving treats to young sprigs of fashion at Richmond and elsewhere. 'In my bolyticks,' he says, 'I am consarevàtiff to de bag-bone.' In fine, he is a puppy, and withal a man of considerable genius in his profession.

This gentleman, then, undertook to complete the musical education of Mrs. Walker. He expressed himself at once 'enshanted vid her gababilities,' found that the extent of her voice was 'brodigious,' and guaranteed that she should become a first-rate singer. The pupil was apt, the master was exceedingly skilful; and, accordingly, Mrs. Walker's progress was very remarkable: although, for her part, honest Mrs. Crump, who used to attend her daughter's lessons, would grumble not a little at the new system, and the endless exercises which she, Morgiana, was made to go through. It was very

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different in *her* time, she said. Incledon knew no music, and who could sing so well now? Give her a good English ballad: it was a thousand times sweeter than your 'Figaros' and 'Semiramides.'

In spite of these objections, however, and with amazing perseverance and cheerfulness, Mrs. Walker pursued the method of study pointed out to her by her master. As soon as her husband went to the City in the morning her operations began; if he remained away at dinner, her labours still continued: nor is it necessary for me to particularise her course of study, nor, indeed, possible; for, between ourselves, none of the male Fitz-Boodles ever could sing a note, and the jargon of scales, and solfeggios is quite unknown to me. But as no man can have seen persons addicted to music without remarking the prodigious energies they display in the pursuit, as there is no father of daughters, however ignorant, but is aware of the piano-rattling and voice-exercising which go on in his house from morning till night, so let all fancy, without further inquiry, how the heroine of our story was at this stage of her existence occupied.

Walker was delighted with her progress, and did everything but pay Baroski her instructor. We know why he didn't pay. It was his nature not to pay bills, except on extreme compulsion; but why did not Baroski employ that extreme compulsion? Because, if he had received his money, he would have lost his pupil, and because he loved his pupil more than money. Rather than lose her he would have given her a guinea as well as her *cachet*. He would sometimes disappoint a great personage, but he never missed his attendance on *her;* and the truth must out, that he was in love with her, as Woolsey and Eglantine had been before.

'By the immortel Chofe!' he would say, 'dat letell ding sents me mad vid her big ice! But only vait avile: in six veeks I can bring any voman in England on her knees to me; and you shall see vat I vill do vid my

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Morgiana.' He attended her for six weeks punctually, and yet Morgiana was never brought down on her knees; he exhausted his best stock of 'gomblimends,' and she never seemed disposed to receive them with anything but laughter. And, as a matter of course, he only grew more infatuated with the lovely creature who was so provokingly good-humoured and so laughingly cruel.

Benjamin Baroski was one of the chief ornaments of the musical profession in London; he charged a guinea for a lesson of three-quarters of an hour abroad, and he had, furthermore, a school at his own residence, where pupils assembled in considerable numbers, and of that curious mixed kind which those may see who frequent these places of instruction. There were very innocent young ladies with their mammas, who would hurry them off trembling to the farther corner of the room when certain doubtful professional characters made their appearance. There was Miss Grigg, who sang at the 'Foundling,' and Mr. Johnson, who sang at the 'Eagle Tavern,' and Madame Fioravanti (a *very* doubtful character), who sang nowhere, but was always coming out at the Italian Opera. There was Lumley Limpiter (Lord Tweedledale's son), one of the most accomplished tenors in town, and who, we have heard, sings with the professionals at a hundred concerts; and with him, too, was Captain Guzzard, of the Guards, with his tremendous bass voice, which all the world declared to be as fine as Porto's, and who shared the applause of Baroski's school with Mr. Bulger, the dentist of Sackville Street, who neglected his ivory and gold plates for his voice, as every unfortunate individual will do who is bitten by the music mania. Then among the ladies there were a half-score of dubious pale governesses and professionals, with turned frocks and lank damp bandeaux of hair under shabby little bonnets; luckless creatures these, who were parting with their poor little store of

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half-guineas to be enabled to say they were pupils of Signor Baroski, and so get pupils of their own among the British youths, or employment in the choruses of the theatres.

The prima donna of the little company was Amelia Larkins, Baroski's own articled pupil, on whose future reputation the eminent master staked his own, whose profits he was to share, and whom he had farmed, to this end, from her father, a most respectable sheriff's officer's assistant, and now, by his daughter's exertions, a considerable capitalist. Amelia is blonde and blue-eyed, her complexion is as bright as snow, her ringlets of the colour of straw, her figure—but why describe her figure? Has not all the world seen her at the Theatres Royal and in America under the name of Miss Ligonier?

Until Mrs. Walker arrived, Miss Larkins was the undisputed princess of the Baroski company—the Semiramide, the Rosina, the Tamina, the Donna Anna. Baroski vaunted her everywhere as the great rising genius of the day, bade Catalani look to her laurels, and questioned whether Miss Stephens could sing a ballad like his pupil. Mrs. Howard Walker arrived, and created, on the first occasion, no small sensation. She improved, and the little society became speedily divided into Walkerites and Larkinsians; and between these two ladies (as indeed between Guzzard and Bulger before mentioned, between Miss Brunck and Miss Horsman, the two contraltos, and between the chorus-singers, after their kind) a great rivalry arose. Larkins was certainly the better singer; but could her straw-coloured curls and dumpy high-shouldered figure bear any comparison with the jetty ringlets and stately form of Morgiana? Did not Mrs. Walker, too, come to the music-lesson in her carriage, and with a black velvet gown and Cashmere shawl, while poor Larkins meekly stepped from Bell Yard, Temple Bar, in an old print gown and clogs, which she left in the hall? 'Larkins sing!' said Mrs. Crump

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sarcastically; 'I'm sure she ought; her mouth's big enough to sing a duet.' Poor Larkins had no one to make epigrams in her behoof; her mother was at home tending the younger ones, her father abroad following the duties of his profession; she had but one protector, as she thought, and that one was Baroski. Mrs. Crump did not fail to tell Lumley Limpiter of her own former triumphs, and to sing him 'Tink-a-tink,' which we have previously heard, and to state how in former days she had been called the Ravenswing. And Lumley, on this hint, made a poem, in which he compared Morgiana's hair to the plumage of the Raven's wing, and Larkinissa's to that of the canary; by which two names the ladies began soon to be known in the school.

Ere long the flight of the Ravenswing became evidently stronger, whereas that of the canary was seen evidently to droop. When Morgiana sang, all the room would cry 'Bravo!' when Amelia performed, scarce a hand was raised for applause of her, except Morgiana's own, and that the Larkinses thought was lifted in odious triumph, rather than in sympathy, for Miss L. was of an envious turn, and little understood the generosity of her rival.

At last, one day, the crowning victory of the Ravenswing came. In the trio of Baroski's own opera of 'Eliogabalo,' 'Rosy lips and rosy wine,' Miss Larkins, who was evidently unwell, was taking the part of the English captive, which she had sung in public concerts before royal dukes, and with considerable applause, and, from some reason, performed it so ill, that Baroski, slapping down the music on the piano in a fury, cried, 'Mrs Howard Walker, as Miss Larkins cannot sing to-day, will you favour us by taking the part of Boadicetta?' Mrs. Walker got up smilingly to obey—the triumph was too great to be withstood; and, as she advanced to the piano, Miss Larkins looked wildly at her, and stood silent for a while, and at last shrieked out

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'*Benjamin!*' in a tone of extreme agony, and dropped fainting down on the ground. Benjamin looked extremely red, it must be confessed, at being thus called by what we shall denominate his Christian name, and Limpiter looked round at Guzzard, and Miss Brunck nudged Miss Horsman, and the lesson concluded rather abruptly that day; for Miss Larkins was carried off to the next room, laid on a couch, and sprinkled with water.

Good-natured Morgiana insisted that her mother should take Miss Larkins to Bell Yard in her carriage, and went herself home on foot; but I don't know that this piece of kindness prevented Larkins from hating her. I should doubt if it did.

Hearing so much of his wife's skill as a singer, the astute Captain Walker determined to take advantage of it for the purpose of increasing his 'connection.' He had Lumley Limpiter at his house before long, which was, indeed, no great matter, for honest Lum would go anywhere for a good dinner, and an opportunity to show off his voice afterwards, and Lumley was begged to bring any more clerks in the Treasury of his acquaintance; Captain Guzzard was invited, and any officers of the Guards whom he might choose to bring; Bulger received occasional cards;—in a word, and after a short time, Mrs. Howard Walker's musical parties began to be considerably *suivies*. Her husband had the satisfaction to see his rooms filled by many great personages; and once or twice in return (indeed, whenever she was wanted, or when people could not afford to hire the first singers) she was asked to parties elsewhere, and treated with that killing civility which our English aristocracy knows how to bestow on artists. Clever and wise aristocracy! It is sweet to mark your ways, and study your commerce with inferior men.

I was just going to commence a tirade regarding the aristocracy here, and to rage against that cool assumption of superiority which distinguishes their lordships' com-

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merce with artists of all sorts: that politeness which, if it condescends to receive artists at all, takes care to have them all together, so that there can be no mistake about their rank—that august patronage of art which rewards it with a silly flourish of knighthood, to be sure, but takes care to exclude it from any contact with its betters in society—I was, I say, just going to commence a tirade against the aristocracy for excluding artists from their company, and to be extremely satirical upon them, for instance, for not receiving my friend Morgiana, when it suddenly came into my head to ask, was Mrs. Walker fit to move in the best society?—to which query it must humbly be replied that she was not. Her education was not such as to make her quite the equal of Baker Street. She was a kind, honest, and clever creature; but, it must be confessed, not refined. Wherever she went she had, if not the finest, at any rate the most showy gown in the room; her ornaments were the biggest; her hats, toques, berets, marabouts, and other fallals, always the most conspicuous. She drops 'h's' here and there. I have seen her eat peas with a knife (and Walker, scowling on the opposite side of the table, striving in vain to catch her eye); and I shall never forget Lady Smigsmag's horror when she asked for porter at dinner at Richmond, and began to drink it out of the pewter pot. It was a fine sight. She lifted up the tankard with one of the finest arms, covered with the biggest bracelets ever seen; and had a bird of paradise on her head, that curled round the pewter disc of the pot as she raised it, like a halo. These peculiarities she had, and has still. She is best away from the genteel world, that is the fact. When she says that 'the weather is so 'ot that it is quite debiliating;' when she laughs, when she hits her neighbour at dinner on the side of the waistcoat (as she will if he should say anything that amuses her), she does what is perfectly natural and unaffected on her part, but what is not customarily done among polite persons, who

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can sneer at her odd manners and her vanity, but don't know the kindness, honesty, and simplicity which distinguish her. This point being admitted, it follows, of course, that the tirade against the aristocracy would, in the present instance, be out of place—so it shall be reserved for some other occasion.

The Ravenswing was a person admirably disposed by nature to be happy. She had a disposition so kindly that any small attention would satisfy it; was pleased when alone; was delighted in a crowd; was charmed with a joke, however old; was always ready to laugh, to sing, to dance, or to be merry; was so tender-hearted that the smallest ballad would make her cry: and hence was supposed, by many persons, to be extremely affected, and by almost all to be a downright coquette. Several competitors for her favour presented themselves besides Baroski. Young dandies used to canter round her phaeton in the Park, and might be seen haunting her doors in the mornings. The fashionable artist of the day made a drawing of her, which was engraved and sold in the shops; a copy of it was printed in a song, 'Black-eyed Maiden of Araby,' the words by Desmond Mulligan, Esquire, the music composed and dedicated to MRS. HOWARD WALKER, by her most faithful and obliged servant, Benjamin Baroski; and at night her Opera-box was full. Her Opera-box? Yes, the heiress of the 'Bootjack' actually had an Opera-box, and some of the most fashionable manhood of London attended it.

Now, in fact, was the time of her greatest prosperity; and her husband gathering these fashionable characters about him, extended his 'agency' considerably, and began to thank his stars that he had married a woman who was as good as a fortune to him.

In extending his agency, however, Mr. Walker increased his expenses proportionably, and multiplied his debts accordingly. More furniture and more plate, more

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wines and more dinner-parties, became necessary; the little pony-phaeton was exchanged for a brougham of evenings; and we may fancy our old friend Mr. Eglantine's rage and disgust, as he looked up from the pit of the Opera, to see Mrs. Walker surrounded by what he called 'the swell young nobs' about London, bowing to my Lord, and laughing with his Grace, and led to her carriage by Sir John.

The Ravenswing's position at this period was rather an exceptional one. She was an honest woman, visited by that peculiar class of our aristocracy who chiefly associate with ladies who are *not* honest. She laughed with all, but she encouraged none. Old Crump was constantly at her side now when she appeared in public, the most watchful of mammas, always awake at the Opera, though she seemed to be always asleep; but no dandy debauchee could deceive her vigilance, and for this reason Walker, who disliked her (as every man naturally will, must, and should dislike his mother-in law), was contented to suffer her in his house to act as a chaperon to Morgiana.

None of the young dandies ever got admission of mornings to the little mansion in the Edgware Road; the blinds were always down; and though you might hear Morgiana's voice half across the Park as she was practising, yet the youthful hall-porter in the sugar-loaf buttons was instructed to deny her, and always declared that his mistress was gone out, with the most admirable assurance.

After some two years of her life of splendour, there were, to be sure, a good number of morning visitors, who came with *single* knocks, and asked for Captain Walker; but these were no more admitted than the dandies aforesaid, and were referred, generally, to the Captain's office, whither they went or not at their convenience. The only man who obtained admission into the house was Baroski, whose cab transported him thrice a week to the

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neighbourhood of Connaught Square, and who obtained ready entrance in his professional capacity.

But even then, and much to the wicked little music-master's disappointment, the dragon Crump was always at the piano with her endless worsted work, or else reading her unfailing *Sunday Times;* and Baroski could only employ 'de langvitch of de ice,' as he called it, with his fair pupil, who used to mimic his manner of rolling his eyes about afterwards, and perform 'Baroski in love' for the amusement of her husband and her mamma. The former had his reasons for overlooking the attentions of the little music-master: and as for the latter, had she not been on the stage, and had not many hundreds of persons, in jest or earnest, made love to her? What else can a pretty woman expect who is much before the public? And so the worthy mother counselled her daughter to bear these attentions with good humour, rather than to make them a subject of perpetual alarm and quarrel.

Baroski, then, was allowed to go on being in love, and was never in the least disturbed in his passion; and if he was not successful, at least the little wretch could have the pleasure of *hinting* that he was, and looking particularly roguish when the Ravenswing was named, aud assuring his friends at the club, that 'upon his vort dere vas no trut *in dat rebort.*'

At last one day it happened that Mrs. Crump did not arrive in time for her daughter's lesson (perhaps it rained and the omnibus was full—a smaller circumstance than that has changed a whole life ere now)—Mrs. Crump did not arrive, and Baroski did, and Morgiana, seeing no great harm, sat down to her lesson as usual, and in the midst of it down went the music-master on his knees, and made a declaration in the most eloquent terms he could muster.

'Don't be a fool, Baroski!' said the lady—(I can't help it if her language was not more choice, and if she

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did not rise with cold dignity, exclaiming, 'Unhand me, sir!')—'Don't be a fool!' said Mrs. Walker, 'but get up and let's finish the lesson.'

'You hard-hearted adorable little greature, vill you not listen to me?'

'No, I vill not listen to you, Benjamin!' concluded the lady. 'Get up and take a chair, and don't go on in that ridiklous way, don't!'

But Baroski, having a speech by heart, determined to deliver himself of it in that posture, and begged Morgiana not to turn avay her divine hice, and to listen to de voice of his despair, and so forth; he seized the lady's hand, and was going to press it to his lips, when she said, with more spirit, perhaps, than grace,—

'Leave go my hand, sir; I'll box your ears if you don't!'

But Baroski wouldn't release her hand, and was proceeding to imprint a kiss upon it; and Mrs. Crump, who had taken the omnibus at a quarter-past twelve instead of that at twelve, had just opened the drawing-room door and was walking in, when Morgiana, turning as red as a peony, and unable to disengage her left hand, which the musician held, raised up her right hand, and, with all her might and main, gave her lover such a tremendous slap in the face as caused him abruptly to release the hand which he held, and would have laid him prostrate on the carpet but for Mrs. Crump, who rushed forward and prevented him from falling by administering right and left a whole shower of slaps, such as he had never endured since the day he was at school.

'What imperence!' said that worthy lady; 'you'll lay hands on my daughter, will you? (one, two). You'll insult a woman in distress, will you, you little coward? (one, two). Take that, and mind your manners, you filthy monster!'

Baroski bounced up in a fury. 'By Chofe, you shall hear of dis!' shouted he; 'you shall pay me dis!'

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'As many more as you please, little Benjamin,' cried the widow. 'Augustus' (to the page), 'was that the Captain's knock?' At this Baroski made for his hat. 'Augustus, show this imperence to the door: and if he tries to come in again, call a policeman: do you hear?'

The music-master vanished very rapidly, and the two ladies, instead of being frightened or falling into hysterics, as their betters would have done, laughed at the odious monster's discomfiture, as they called him. 'Such a man as that set himself up against my Howard!' said Morgiana, with becoming pride; but it was agreed between them that Howard should know nothing of what had occurred, for fear of quarrels, or lest he should be annoyed. So when he came home not a word was said; and only that his wife met him with more warmth than usual, you could not have guessed that anything extraordinary had occurred. It is not my fault that my heroine's sensibilities were not more keen, that she had not the least occasion for sal-volatile or symptom of a fainting fit; but so it was, and Mr. Howard Walker knew nothing of the quarrel between his wife and her instructor until——

Until he was arrested next day at the suit of Benjamin Baroski for two hundred and twenty guineas, and, in default of payment, was conducted by Mr. Tobias Larkins to his principal's lock-up house in Chancery Lane.

CHAPTER V

IN WHICH MR. WALKER FALLS INTO DIFFICULTIES, AND MRS. WALKER MAKES MANY FOOLISH ATTEMPTS TO RESCUE HIM

I HOPE the beloved reader is not silly enough to imagine that Mr. Walker, on finding himself inspunged for debt in Chancery Lane, was so foolish as to think of applying

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to any of his friends (those great personages who have appeared every now and then in the course of this little history, and have served to give it a fashionable air). No, no; he knew the world too well; and that, though Billingsgate would give him as many dozen of claret as he could carry away under his belt, as the phrase is (I can't help it, madam, if the phrase is not more genteel), and though Vauxhall would lend him his carriage, slap him on the back, and dine at his house,—their lordships would have seen Mr. Walker depending from a beam in front of the Old Bailey rather than have helped him to a hundred pounds.

And why, forsooth, should we expect otherwise in the world? I observe that men who complain of its selfishness are quite as selfish as the world is, and no more liberal of money, than their neighbours; and I am quite sure with regard to Captain Walker that he would have treated a friend in want exactly as he when in want was treated. There was only his lady who was in the least afflicted by his captivity; and as for the club, that went on, we are bound to say, exactly as it did on the day previous to his disappearance.

By the way, about clubs—could we not, but for fear of detaining the fair reader too long, enter into a wholesome dissertation here on the manner of friendship established in those institutions, and the noble feeling of selfishness which they are likely to encourage in the male race? I put out of the question the stale topics of complaint, such as leaving home, encouraging gormandising and luxurious habits, &c.; but look also at the dealings of club-men with one another. Look at the rush for the evening paper! See how Shiverton orders a fire in the dog-days, and Swettenham opens the windows in February. See how Cramley takes the whole breast of the turkey on his plate, and how many times Jenkins sends away his beggarly half-pint of sherry! Clubbery is organised egotism. Club intimacy is care-

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fully and wonderfully removed from friendship. You meet Smith for twenty years, exchange the day's news with him, laugh with him over the last joke, grow as well acquainted as two men may be together—and one day, at the end of the list of members of the club, you read in a little paragraph by itself, with all the honours,

MEMBER DECEASED.

Smith, John, Esq.;

or he, on the other hand, has the advantage of reading your own name selected for a similar typographical distinction. There it is, that abominable little exclusive list at the end of every club-catalogue—you can't avoid it. I belong to eight clubs myself, and know that one year Fitz-Boodle, George Savage, Esq. (unless it should please fate to remove my brother and his six sons, when of course it would be Fitz-Boodle, Sir George Savage, Bart.), will appear in the dismal category. There is that list; down I must go in it;—the day will come, and I shan't be seen in the bow-window, some one else will be sitting in the vacant arm-chair: the rubber will begin as usual, and yet somehow Fitz will not be there. 'Where's Fitz?' says Trumpington, just arrived from the Rhine. 'Don't you know?' says Punter, turning down his thumb to the carpet. 'You led the club, I think?' says Ruff to his partner (the *other* partner!), and the waiter snuffs the candles.

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I hope in the course of the above little pause, every single member of a club who reads this has profited by the perusal. He may belong, I say, to eight clubs; he will die, and not be missed by any of the five thousand members. Peace be to him; the waiters will forget him, and his name will pass away, and another great-coat will hang on the hook whence his own used to be dependent.

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And this, I need not say, is the beauty of the club-institutions. If it were otherwise—if, forsooth, we were to be sorry when our friends died, or to draw out our purses when our friends were in want, we should be insolvent, and life would be miserable. Be it ours to button up our pockets and out hearts; and to make merry—it is enough to swim down this life-stream for ourselves; if Poverty is clutching hold of our heels, or Friendship would catch an arm, kick them both off. Every man for himself is the word, and plenty to do too.

My friend Captain Walker had practised the above maxims so long and resolutely as to be quite aware when he came himself to be in distress, that not a single soul in the whole universe would help him, and he took his measures accordingly.

When carried to Mr. Bendigo's lock-up house, he summoned that gentleman in a very haughty way, took a blank banker's cheque out of his pocket-book, and filling it up for the exact sum of the writ, orders Mr. Bendigo forthwith to open the door and let him go forth.

Mr. Bendigo, smiling with exceeding archness, and putting a finger covered all over with diamond rings to his extremely aquiline nose, inquired of Mr. Walker whether he saw anything green about his face? intimating by this gay and good-humoured interrogatory his suspicion of the unsatisfactory nature of the document handed over to him by Mr. Walker.

'Hang it, sir!' says Mr. Walker, 'go and get the cheque cashed, and be quick about it. Send your man in a cab, and here's a half-crown to pay for it.' The confident air somewhat staggers the bailiff, who asked him whether he would like any refreshment while his man was absent getting the amount of the cheque, and treated his prisoner with great civility during the time of the messenger's journey.

But as Captain Walker had but a balance of two

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pounds five and twopence (this sum was afterwards divided among his creditors, the law expenses being previously deducted from it), the bankers of course declined to cash the Captain's draft for two hundred and odd pounds, simply writing the words 'No effects' on the paper; on receiving which reply Walker, far from being cast down, burst out laughing very gaily, produced a real five-pound note, and called upon his host for a bottle of champagne, which the two worthies drank in perfect friendship and good humour. The bottle was scarcely finished, and the young Israelitish gentleman who acts as waiter in Cursitor Street had only time to remove the flask and the glasses, when poor Morgiana with a flood of tears rushed into her husband's arms, and flung herself on his neck, and calling him her 'dearest, blessed Howard,' would have fainted at his feet; but that he, breaking out in a fury of oaths, asked her how, after getting him into that scrape through her infernal extravagance, she dared to show her face before him? This address speedily frightened the poor thing out of her fainting-fit—there is nothing so good for female hysterics as a little conjugal sternness, nay, brutality, as many husbands can aver who are in the habit of employing the remedy.

'My extravagance, Howard?' said she, in a faint way; and quite put off her purpose of swooning by the sudden attack made upon her—'Surely, my love, you have nothing to complain of——'

'To complain of, ma'am?' roared the excellent Walker. 'Is two hundred guineas to a music master nothing to complain of? Did you bring me such a fortune as to authorise your taking guinea lessons? Haven't I raised you out of your sphere of life and introduced you to the best of the land? Haven't I dressed you like a duchess? Haven't I been for you such a husband as very few women in the world ever had, madam?—answer me that.'

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'Indeed, Howard, you were always very kind,' sobbed the lady.

'Haven't I toiled and slaved for you—been out all day working for you? Haven't I allowed your vulgar old mother to come to your house—to my house, I say? Haven't I done all this?'

She could not deny it, and Walker, who was in a rage (and when a man is in a rage, for what on earth is a wife made but that he should vent his rage on her?), continued for some time in this strain, and so abused, frightened, and overcame poor Morgiana that she left her husband fully convinced that she was the most guilty of beings, and bemoaning his double bad fortune, that her Howard was ruined and she the cause of his misfortunes.

When she was gone, Mr. Walker resumed his equanimity (for he was not one of those men whom a few months of the King's Bench were likely to terrify), and drank several glasses of punch in company with his host; with whom in perfect calmness he talked over his affairs. That he intended to pay his debt and quit the spunging-house next day is a matter of course; no one ever was yet put in a spunging-house that did not pledge his veracity he intended to quit it to-morrow. Mr. Bendigo said he should be heartily glad to open the door to him, and in the meantime sent out diligently to see among his friends if there were any more detainers against the Captain, and to inform the Captain's creditors to come forward against him.

Morgiana went home in profound grief, it may be imagined, and could hardly refrain from bursting into tears when the sugar-loaf page asked whether master was coming home early, or whether he had taken his key; she lay awake tossing and wretched the whole night, and very early in the morning rose up, and dressed, and went out.

Before nine o'clock she was in Cursitor Street, and

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once more joyfully bounced into her husband's arms; who woke up yawning and swearing somewhat, with a severe headache, occasioned by the jollification of the previous night: for, strange though it may seem, there are perhaps no places in Europe where jollity is more practised than in prisons for debt; and I declare for my own part (I mean, of course, that I went to visit a friend) I have dined at Mr. Aminadab's as sumptuously as at Long's.

But it is necessary to account for Morgiana's joyfulness; which was strange in her husband's perplexity, and after her sorrow of the previous night. Well, then, when Mrs. Walker went out in the morning, she did so with a very large basket under her arm. 'Shall I carry the basket, ma'am!' said the page, seizing it with much alacrity.

'No, thank you,' cried his mistress, with equal eagerness: 'it's only——'

'Of course, ma'am,' replied the boy, sneering, 'I knew it was that.'

'Glass,' continued Mrs. Walker, turning extremely red. 'Have the goodness to call a coach, sir, and not to speak till you are questioned.'

The young gentleman disappeared upon his errand: the coach was called and came. Mrs. Walker slipped into it with her basket, and the page went downstairs to his companions in the kitchen, and said, 'It's a-comin'! master's in quod, and missus has gone out to pawn the plate. When the cook went out that day, she somehow had by mistake placed in her basket a dozen of table-knives and a plated egg-stand. When the lady's-maid took a walk in the course of the afternoon, she found she had occasion for eight cambric pocket-handkerchiefs (marked with her mistress's cipher), half-a-dozen pair of shoes, gloves, long and short, some silk stockings, and a gold-headed scent-bottle. 'Both the new cashmeres is gone,' said she, 'and there's nothing left in Mrs.

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Walker's trinket-box but a paper of pins and an old coral bracelet.' As for the page, he rushed incontinently to his master's dressing-room and examined every one of the pockets of his clothes; made a parcel of some of them, and opened all the drawers which Walker had not locked before his departure. He only found three halfpence and a bill-stamp, and about forty-five tradesmen's accounts, neatly labelled and tied up with red tape. These three worthies, a groom who was a great admirer of Trimmer the lady's-maid, and a policeman a friend of the cook's, sat down to a comfortable dinner at the usual hour, and it was agreed among them all that Walker's ruin was certain. The cook made the policeman a present of a china punch-bowl which Mrs. Walker had given her; and the lady's-maid gave her friend the 'Book of Beauty' for last year, and the third volume of Byron's poems from the drawing-room table.

'I'm dashed if she ain't taken the little French clock, too,' said the page, and so indeed Mrs. Walker had; it slipped in the basket where it lay enveloped in one of her shawls, and then struck madly and unnaturally a great number of times, as Morgiana was lifting her store of treasures out of the hackney-coach. The coachman wagged his head sadly as he saw her walking as quick as she could under her heavy load, and disappearing round the corner of the street at which Mr. Balls's celebrated jewellery establishment is situated. It is a grand shop, with magnificent silver cups and salvers, rare gold-headed canes, flutes, watches, diamond brooches, and a few fine specimens of the old masters in the window, and under the words—

BALLS, JEWELLER.

you read, *Money Lent.*

in the very smallest type, on the door.

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The interview with Mr. Balls need not be described; but it must have been a satisfactory one, for at the end of half-an-hour Morgiana returned and bounded into the coach with sparkling eyes, and told the driver to *gallop* to Cursitor Street; which, smiling, he promised to do, and accordingly set off in that direction at the rate of four miles an hour. 'I thought so,' said the philosophic charioteer. 'When a man's in quod, a woman don't mind her silver spoons;' and he was so delighted with her action, that he forgot to grumble when she came to settle accounts with him, even though she gave him only double his fare.

'Take me to him,' said she to the young Hebrew who opened the door.

'To whom?' says the sarcastic youth; 'there's twenty *hims* here. You're precious early.'

'To Captain Walker, young man,' replied Morgiana haughtily; whereupon the youth opening the second door, and seeing Mr. Bendigo in a flowered dressing-gown descending the stairs, exclaimed, 'Papa, here's a lady for the Captain.' 'I'm come to free him,' said she, trembling and holding out a bundle of bank-notes. 'Here's the amount of your claim, sir,—two hundred and twenty guineas, as you told me last night.' The Jew took the notes, and grinned as he looked at her, and grinned double as he looked at his son, and begged Mrs. Walker to step into his study and take a receipt. When the door of that apartment closed upon the lady and his father, Mr. Bendigo the younger fell back in an agony of laughter, which it is impossible to describe in words, and presently ran out into a court, where some of the luckless inmates of the house were already taking the air, and communicated something to them, which made those individuals also laugh as uproariously as he had previously done.

Well, after joyfully taking the receipt from Mr. Bendigo (how her cheeks flushed, and her heart fluttered,

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as she dried it on the blotting-book !), and after turning very pale again on hearing that the Captain had had a very bad night : 'And well he might, poor dear !' said she (at which Mr. Bendigo, having no person to grin at, grinned at a marble bust of Mr. Pitt, which ornamented his sideboard) — Morgiana, I say, these preliminaries being concluded, was conducted to her husband's apartment, and once more flinging her arms round her dearest Howard's neck, told him, with one of the sweetest smiles in the world, to make haste and get up and come home, for breakfast was waiting and the carriage at the door.

'What do you mean, love ?' said the Captain, starting up and looking exceedingly surprised.

'I mean that my dearest is free; that the odious little creature is paid—at least the horrid bailiff is.'

'Have you been to Baroski ?' said Walker, turning very red.

'Howard !' said his wife, quite indignant.

'Did—did your mother give you the money ?' asked the Captain.

'No; I had it by me,' replies Mrs. Walker, with a very knowing look.

Walker was more surprised than ever. 'Have you any more by you ?' said he.

Mrs. Walker showed him her purse with two guineas. 'That is all, love,' she said. 'And I wish,' continued she, 'you would give me a draft to pay a whole list of little bills that have somehow all come in within the last few days.'

'Well, well, you shall have the cheque,' continued Mr. Walker, and began forthwith to make his toilet, which completed, he rang for Mr. Bendigo, and his bill, and intimated his wish to go home directly.

The honoured bailiff brought the bill, but with regard to his being free, said it was impossible.

'How impossible ?' said Mrs. Walker, turning very red and then very pale. 'Did I not pay just now ?'

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'So you did, and you've got the reshipt; but there's another detainer against the Captain for a hundred and fifty. Eglantine & Mossrose, of Bond Street;—perfumery for five years, you know.'

'You don't mean to say you were such a fool as to pay without asking if there were any more detainers?' roared Walker to his wife.

'Yes, she was though,' chuckled Mr. Bendigo; 'but she'll know better the next time: and besides, Captain, what's a hundred and fifty pounds to you?'

Though Walker desired nothing so much in the world at that moment as the liberty to knock down his wife, his sense of prudence overcame his desire for justice: if that feeling may be called prudence on his part, which consisted in a strong wish to cheat the bailiff into the idea that he (Walker) was an exceedingly respectable and wealthy man. Many worthy persons indulge in this fond notion, that they are imposing upon the world; strive to fancy, for instance, that their bankers consider them men of property because they keep a tolerable balance, pay little tradesmen's bills with ostentatious punctuality, and so forth—but the world, let us be pretty sure, is as wise as need be, and guesses our real condition with a marvellous instinct, or learns it with curious skill. The London tradesman is one of the keenest judges of human nature extant; and if a tradesman, how much more a bailiff? In reply to the ironic question, 'What's a hundred and fifty pounds to you?' Walker, collecting himself, answers, 'It is an infamous imposition, and I owe the money no more than you do; but, nevertheless, I shall instruct my lawyers to pay it in the course of the morning: under protest, of course.'

'Oh, of course,' said Mr. Bendigo, bowing and quitting the room, and leaving Mrs. Walker to the pleasure of a *tête-à-tête* with her husband.

And now being alone with the partner of his bosom, the worthy gentleman began an address to her which

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cannot be put down on paper here; because the world is exceedingly squeamish, and does not care to hear the whole truth about rascals, and because the fact is that almost every other word of the Captain's speech was a curse, such as would shock the beloved reader were it put in print.

Fancy, then, in lieu of the conversation, a scoundrel, disappointed and in a fury, wreaking his brutal revenge upon an amiable woman, who sits trembling and pale, and wondering at this sudden exhibition of wrath. Fancy how he clenches his fists and stands over her, and stamps and screams out curses with a livid face, growing wilder and wilder in his rage; wrenching her hand when she wants to turn away, and only stopping at last when she has fallen off the chair in a fainting-fit, with a heart-breaking sob that made the Jew-boy who was listening at the keyhole turn quite pale and walk away. Well, it *is* best, perhaps, that such a conversation should not be told at length:—at the end of it, when Mr. Walker had his wife lifeless on the floor, he seized a water-jug and poured it over her; which operation pretty soon brought her to herself, and shaking her black ringlets, she looked up once more again timidly into his face, and took his hand, and began to cry.

He spoke now in a somewhat softer voice, and let her keep paddling on with his hand as before; he *couldn't* speak very fiercely to the poor girl in her attitude of defeat, and tenderness, and supplication. 'Morgiana,' said he, 'your extravagance and carelessness have brought me to ruin, I'm afraid. If you had chosen to have gone to Baroski, a word from you would have made him withdraw the writ, and my property wouldn't have been sacrificed, as it has now been, for nothing. It mayn't be yet too late, however, to retrieve ourselves. This bill of Eglantine's is a regular conspiracy, I am sure, between Mossrose and Bendigo here: you must go to Eglantine —he's an old—an old flame of yours, you know.'

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She dropped his hand. 'I can't go to Eglantine after what has passed between us,' she said; but Walker's face instantly began to wear a certain look, and she said with a shudder, 'Well, well, dear, I *will* go.' 'You will go to Eglantine, and ask him to take a bill for the amount of this shameful demand—at any date, never mind what. Mind, however, to see him alone, and I'm sure if you choose you can settle the business. Make haste; set off directly, and come back, as there may be more detainers in.

Trembling, and in a great flutter, Morgiana put on her bonnet and gloves, and went towards the door. 'It's a fine morning,' said Mr. Walker, looking out: 'a walk will do you good: and—Morgiana—didn't you say you had a couple of guineas in your pocket?'

'Here it is,' said she, smiling all at once, and holding up her face to be kissed. She paid the two guineas for the kiss. Was it not a mean act? 'Is it possible that people can love where they do not respect?' says Miss Prim: 'I never would.' Nobody asked you, Miss Prim: but recollect Morgiana was not born with your advantages of education and breeding; and was, in fact, a poor vulgar creature, who loved Mr. Walker, not because her mamma told her, nor because he was an exceedingly eligible and well-brought-up young man, but because she could not help it, and knew no better. Nor is Mrs. Walker set up as a model of virtue: ah, no! when I want a model of virtue I will call in Baker Street, and ask for a sitting of my dear (if I may be permitted to say so) Miss Prim.

We have Mr. Howard Walker safely housed in Mr. Bendigo's establishment in Cursitor Street, Chancery Lane; and it looks like mockery and want of feeling towards the excellent hero of this story (or, as should rather be said, towards the husband of the heroine) to say what he *might* have been but for the unlucky little circumstance of Baroski's passion for Morgiana.

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If Baroski had not fallen in love with Morgiana, he would not have given her two hundred guineas' worth of lessons: he would not have so far presumed as to seize her hand, and attempt to kiss it; if he had not attempted to kiss her, she would not have boxed his ears; he would not have taken out the writ against Walker; Walker would have been free, very possibly rich, and therefore certainly respected: he always said that a month's more liberty would have set him beyond the reach of misfortune.

The assertion is very likely a correct one; for Walker had a flashy enterprising genius, which ends in wealth sometimes; in the King's Bench not seldom; occasionally, alas! in Van Diemen's Land. He might have been rich, could he have kept his credit, and had not his personal expenses and extravagances pulled him down. He had gallantly availed himself of his wife's fortune; nor could any man in London, as he proudly said, have made five hundred pounds go so far. He had, as we have seen, furnished a house, sideboard, and cellar with it: he had a carriage, and horses in his stable, and with the remainder he had purchased shares in four companies —of three of which he was founder and director, had conducted innumerable bargains in the foreign stocks, had lived and entertained sumptuously, and made himself a very considerable income. He had set up THE CAPITOL Loan and Life Assurance Company, had discovered the Chimborazo gold-mines, and the Society for Recovering and Draining the Pontine Marshes; capital ten millions; patron HIS HOLINESS THE POPE. It certainly was stated in an evening paper that His Holiness had made him a Knight of the Spur, and had offered to him the rank of Count; and he was raising a loan for His Highness the Cacique of Panama, who had sent him (by way of dividend) the Grand Cordon of His Highness's order of the Castle and Falcon, which might be seen any day at his office in Bond Street, with the parchments

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signed and sealed by the Grand Master and Falcon King-at-arms of His Highness. In a week more Walker would have raised a hundred thousand pounds on His Highness's twenty per cent. loan; he would have had fifteen thousand pounds' commission for himself; his companies would have risen to par, he would have realised his shares; he would have gone into Parliament; he would have been made a baronet, who knows? a peer, probably! 'And I appeal to you, sir,' Walker would say to his friends, 'could any man have shown better proof of his affection for his wife than by laying out her little miserable money as I did! They call me heartless, sir, because I didn't succeed; sir, my life has been a series of sacrifices for that woman, such as no man ever performed before.'

A proof of Walker's dexterity and capability for business may be seen in the fact that he had actually appeased and reconciled one of his bitterest enemies—our honest friend Eglantine. After Walker's marriage Eglantine, who had now no mercantile dealings with his former agent, became so enraged with him, that, as the only means of revenge in his power, he sent him in his bill for goods supplied to the amount of one hundred and fifty guineas, and sued him for the amount. But Walker stepped boldly over to his enemy, and in the course of half-an-hour they were friends.

Eglantine promised to forego his claim, and accepted in lieu of it three hundred-pound shares of the ex-Panama stock, bearing twenty-five per cent., payable half-yearly at the house of Hocus Brothers, St. Swithin's Lane; three hundred-pound shares, and the *second* class of the order of the Castle and Falcon, with the riband and badge. 'In four years, Eglantine, my boy, I hope to get you the Grand Cordon of the order,' said Walker: 'I hope to see you a KNIGHT GRAND CROSS, with a grant of a hundred thousand acres reclaimed from the Isthmus.'

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To do my poor Eglantine justice, he did not care for the hundred thousand acres—it was the star that delighted him :—ah ! how his fat chest heaved with delight as he sewed on the cross and riband to his dress-coat, and lighted up four wax candles and looked at himself in the glass. He was known to wear a great-coat after that—it was that he might wear the cross under it. That year he went on a trip to Boulogne. He was dreadfully ill during the voyage, but as the vessel entered the port he was seen to emerge from the cabin, his coat open, the star blazing on his chest ; the soldiers saluted him as he walked the streets, he was called Monsieur le Chevalier, and when he went home he entered into negotiations with Walker to purchase a commission in His Highness's service. Walker said he would get him the nominal rank of Captain, the fees at the Panama *War Office* were five-and-twenty pounds, which sum honest Eglantine produced, and had his commission, and a pack of visiting cards printed as Captain Archibald Eglantine, K.C.F. Many a time he looked at them as they lay in his desk, and he kept the cross in his dressing-table, and wore it as he shaved every morning.

His Highness the Cacique, it is well known, came to England, and had lodgings in Regent Street, where he held a levee, at which Eglantine appeared in the Panama uniform, and was most graciously received by his Sovereign. His Highness proposed to make Captain Eglantine his aide-de-camp with the rank of Colonel, but the Captain's exchequer was rather low at that moment, and the fees at the 'War Office' were peremptory. Meanwhile His Highness left Regent Street, was said by some to have returned to Panama, by others to be in his native city of Cork, by others to be leading a life of retirement in the New Cut, Lambeth ; at any rate was not visible for some time, so that Captain Eglantine's advancement did not take place. Eglantine was somehow ashamed to mention his military and chivalric rank

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to Mr. Mossrose, when that gentleman came into partnership with him; and kept these facts secret, until they were detected by a very painful circumstance. On the very day when Walker was arrested at the suit of Benjamin Baroski, there appeared in the newspapers an account of the imprisonment of His Highness the Prince of Panama for a bill owing to a licensed victualler in Ratcliff Highway. The magistrate to whom the victualler subsequently came to complain passed many pleasantries on the occasion. He asked whether His Highness did not drink like a swan with two necks; whether he had brought any Belles savages with him from Panama, and so forth; and the whole court, said the report, 'was convulsed with laughter when Boniface produced a green and yellow riband with a large star of the order of the Castle and Falcon, with which His Highness proposed to gratify him, in lieu of paying his little bill.'

It was as he was reading the above document with a bleeding heart that Mr. Mossrose came in from his daily walk to the City. 'Vell, Eglantine,' says he, 'have you heard the newsh?'

'About His Highness?'

'About your friend Valker; he's arrested for two hundred poundsh!'

Eglantine at this could contain no more; but told his story of how he had been induced to accept three hundred pounds of Panama stock for his account against Walker, and cursed his stars for his folly.

'Vell, you've only to bring in another bill,' said the younger perfumer; 'swear he owes you a hundred and fifty pounds, and we'll have a writ out against him this afternoon.'

And so a second writ was taken out against Captain Walker.

'You'll have his wife here very likely in a day or two,' said Mr. Mossrose to his partner; 'them chaps always

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sends their wives, and I hope you know how to deal with her.'

'I don't value her a fig's hend,' said Eglantine. 'I'll treat her like the dust of the hearth. After that woman's conduct to me, I should like to see her have the haudacity to come here; and if she does, you'll see how I'll serve her.'

The worthy perfumer was, in fact, resolved to be exceedingly hard-hearted in his behaviour towards his old love, and acted over at night in bed the scene which was to occur when the meeting should take place. Oh, thought he, but it will be a grand thing to see the proud Morgiana on her knees to me; and me a-pointing to the door, and saying, 'Madam, you've steeled this 'eart against you, you have;—bury the recollection of old times, of those old times when I thought my 'eart would have broke, but it didn't—no: 'earts are made of sterner stuff. I didn't die, as I thought I should; I stood it, and live to see the woman I despised at my feet—ha, ha, at my feet!'

In the midst of these thoughts Mr. Eglantine fell asleep; but it was evident that the idea of seeing Morgiana once more agitated him considerably, else why should he have been at the pains of preparing so much heroism? His sleep was exceedingly fitful and troubled; he saw Morgiana in a hundred shapes; he dreamed that he was dressing her hair; that he was riding with her to Richmond; that the horse turned into a dragon, and Morgiana into Woolsey, who took him by the throat and choked him, while the dragon played the key-bugle. And in the morning when Mossrose was gone to his business in the City, and he sat reading the *Morning Post* in his study, ah! what a thump his heart gave as the lady of his dreams actually stood before him!

Many a lady who purchased brushes at Eglantine's shop would have given ten guineas for such a colour as his when he saw her. His heart beat violently, he was

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almost choking in his stays: he had been prepared for the visit, but his courage failed him now it had come. They were both silent for some minutes.

'You know what I am come for,' at last said Morgiana from under her veil, but she put it aside as she spoke.

'I—that is—yes—it's a painful affair, mem,' he said, giving one look at her pale face, and then turning away in a flurry. 'I beg to refer you to Blunt, Hone & Sharpus, my lawyers, mem,' he added, collecting himself.

'I didn't expect this from *you*, Mr. Eglantine,' said the lady, and began to sob.

'And after what's 'appened, I didn't expect a visit from *you*, mem. I thought Mrs. Capting Walker was too great a dame to visit poor Harchibald Eglantine (though some of the first men in the country *do* visit him). Is there anything in which I can oblige you, mem?'

'O heavens!' cried the poor woman; 'have I no friend left? I never thought that you, too, would have deserted me, Mr. Archibald.'

The 'Archibald,' pronounced in the old way, had evidently an effect on the perfumer; he winced and looked at her very eagerly for a moment. 'What can I do for you, mem?' at last said he.

'What is this bill against Mr. Walker, for which he is now in prison?'

'Perfumery supplied for five years; that man used more 'air-brushes than any duke in the land, and as for eau-de-Cologne, he must have bathed himself in it. He hordered me about like a lord. He never paid me one shilling—he stabbed me in my most vital part—but ah! ah! never mind *that*: and I said I would be revenged, and I *am*.'

The perfumer was quite in a rage again by this time, and wiped his fat face with his pocket-handkerchief, and glared upon Mrs. Walker with a most determined air.

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'Revenged on whom? Archibald—Mr. Eglantine, revenged on me—on a poor woman whom you made miserable! You would not have done so once.'

'Ha! and a precious way you treated me *once*,' said Eglantine; 'don't talk to me, mem, of *once*. Bury the recollection of once for hever! I thought my 'eart would have broke once, but no: 'earts are made of sterner stuff. I didn't die, as I thought I should; I stood it—and I live to see the woman who despised me at my feet.'

'Oh, Archibald!' was all the lady could say, and she fell to sobbing again: it was perhaps her best argument with the perfumer.

'Oh, Harchibald, indeed!' continued he, beginning to swell; 'don't call me Harchibald, Morgiana. Think what a position you might have held if you'd chose: when, when—you *might* have called me Harchibald. Now it's no use,' added he, with harrowing pathos; 'but, though I've been wronged, I can't bear to see women in tears—tell me what I can do.'

'Dear good Mr. Eglantine, send to your lawyers and stop this horrid prosecution—take Mr. Walker's acknowledgment for the debt. If he is free, he is sure to have a very large sum of money in a few days, and will pay you all. Do not ruin him—do not ruin me by persisting now. Be the old kind Eglantine you were.'

Eglantine took a hand, which Morgiana did not refuse; he thought about old times. He had known her since childhood almost; as a girl he dangled her on his knee at the 'Kidneys;' as a woman he had adored her—his heart was melted.

'He did pay me in a sort of way,' reasoned the perfumer with himself—'these bonds, though they are not worth much, I took 'em for better or for worse, and I can't bear to see her crying, and to trample on a woman in distress. Morgiana,' he added in a loud cheerful

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voice, 'cheer up: I'll give you a release for your husband: I *will* be the old kind Eglantine I was.'

'Be the old kind jackass you vash!' here roared a voice that made Mr. Eglantine start. 'Vy, vat an old fat fool you are, Eglantine, to give up our just debts because a voman comes snivelling and crying to you—and such a voman, too!' exclaimed Mr. Mossrose, for his was the voice.

'Such a woman, sir?' cried the senior partner.

'Yes; such a woman—vy, didn't she jilt you herself!—hasn't she been trying the same game with Baroski; and are you so green as to give up a hundred and fifty pounds because she takes a fancy to come vimpering here? I won't, I can tell you. The money's as much mine as it is yours, and I'll have it or keep Walker's body, that's what I will.'

At the presence of his partner, the timid good genius of Eglantine, which had prompted him to mercy and kindness, at once outspread its frightened wings and flew away.

'You see how it is, Mrs. W.,' said he, looking down; 'it's an affair of business—in all these here affairs of business Mr. Mossrose is the managing man; ain't you, Mr. Mossrose?'

'A pretty business it would be if I wasn't,' replied Mossrose doggedly. 'Come, ma'am,' says he, 'I'll tell you vat I do: I take fifty per shent; not a farthing less—give me that and out your husband goes.'

'Oh, sir, Howard will pay you in a week.'

'Vell, den, let him stop at my uncle Bendigo's for a week, and come out den—he's very comfortable there,' said Shylock, with a grin. 'Hadn't you better go to the shop, Mr. Eglantine,' continued he, 'and look after your business? Mrs. Walker can't want you to listen to her all day.'

Eglantine was glad of the excuse, and slunk out of the studio; not into the shop, but into his parlour;

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where he drank off a great glass of maraschino, and sat blushing and exceedingly agitated, until Mossrose came to tell him that Mrs. W. was gone, and wouldn't trouble him any more. But although he drank several more glasses of maraschino, and went to the play that night, and to the Cider-cellars afterwards, neither the liquor, nor the play, nor the delightful comic songs at the cellars, could drive Mrs. Walker out of his head, and the memory of old times, and the image of her pale weeping face.

Morgiana tottered out of the shop, scarcely heeding the voice of Mr. Mossrose, who said, 'I'll take forty per shent' (and went back to his duty cursing himself for a soft-hearted fool for giving up so much of his rights to a puling woman). Morgiana, I say, tottered out of the shop, and went up Conduit Street, weeping, weeping with all her eyes. She was quite faint, for she had taken nothing that morning but the glass of water which the pastry-cook in the Strand had given her, and was forced to take hold of the railings of a house for support just as a little gentleman with a yellow handkerchief under his arm was issuing from the door.

'Good heavens, Mrs. Walker!' said the gentleman. It was no other than Mr. Woolsey, who was going forth to try a body-coat for a customer. 'Are you ill?—what's the matter? for God's sake come in!' and he took her arm under his, and led her into his back-parlour, and seated her, and had some wine and water before her in one minute, before she had said one single word regarding herself.

As soon as she was somewhat recovered, and with the interruption of a thousand sobs, the poor thing told as well as she could her little story. Mr. Eglantine had arrested Mr. Walker: she had been trying to gain time for him; Eglantine had refused.

'The hard-hearted cowardly brute to refuse *her* anything!' said loyal Mr. Woolsey. 'My dear,' says he,

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'I've no reason to love your husband, and I know too much about him to respect him; but I love and respect *you*, and will spend my last shilling to serve you.' At which Morgiana could only take his hand and cry a great deal more than ever. She said Mr. Walker would have a great deal of money in a week, that he was the best of husbands, and she was sure Mr. Woolsey would think better of him when he knew him; that Mr. Eglantine's bill was one hundred and fifty pounds, but that Mr. Mossrose would take forty per cent., if Mr. Woolsey could say how much that was.

'I'll pay a thousand pound to do you good,' said Mr. Woolsey, bouncing up; 'stay here for ten minutes, my dear, until my return, and all shall be right, as you will see.' He was back in ten minutes, and had called a cab from the stand opposite (all the coachmen there had seen and commented on Mrs. Walker's woebegone looks), and they were off for Cursitor Street in a moment. 'They'll settle the whole debt for twenty pounds,' said he, and showed an order to that effect from Mr. Mossrose to Mr. Bendigo, empowering the latter to release Walker on receiving Mr. Woolsey's acknowledgment for the above sum.

. . . . . .

'There's no use paying it,' said Mr. Walker doggedly; 'It would only be robbing you, Mr. Woolsey—seven more detainers have come in while my wife has been away; I must go through the court now; but,' he added in a whisper to the tailor, 'my good sir, my debts of *honour* are sacred, and if you will have the goodness to lend *me* the twenty pounds, I pledge you my word, as a gentleman, to return it when I come out of quod.'

It is probable that Mr. Woolsey declined this; for, as soon as he was gone, Walker, in a tremendous fury, began cursing his wife for dawdling three hours on the road. 'Why the deuce, ma'am, didn't you take a cab?' roared he, when he heard she had walked to Bond Street.

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'Those writs have only been in half-an-hour, and I might have been off but for you.'

'Oh, Howard,' said she, 'didn't you take—didn't I give you my—my last shilling?' and fell back and wept again more bitterly than ever.

'Well, love,' said her amiable husband, turning rather red, 'never mind, it wasn't your fault. It is but going through the court. It is no great odds. I forgive you.'

CHAPTER VI

IN WHICH MR. WALKER STILL REMAINS IN DIFFICULTIES, BUT SHOWS GREAT RESIGNATION UNDER HIS MISFORTUNES

THE exemplary Walker, seeing that escape from his enemies was hopeless, and that it was his duty as a man to turn on them and face them, now determined to quit the splendid though narrow lodgings which Mr. Bendigo had provided for him, and undergo the martyrdom of the Fleet. Accordingly, in company with that gentleman, he came over to Her Majesty's prison, and gave himself into the custody of the officers there; and did not apply for the accommodation of the Rules (by which in those days the captivity of some debtors was considerably lightened), because he knew perfectly well that there was no person in the wide world who would give a security for the heavy sums for which Walker was answerable. What these sums were is no matter, and on this head we do not think it at all necessary to satisfy the curiosity of the reader. He may have owed hundreds—thousands, his creditors only can tell; he paid the dividend which has been formerly mentioned, and showed thereby his desire to satisfy all claims upon him to the uttermost farthing.

As for the little house in Connaught Square, when, after

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quitting her husband, Morgiana drove back thither, the door was opened by the page, who instantly thanked her to pay his wages; and in the drawing-room, on a yellow satin sofa, sat a seedy man (with a pot of porter beside him placed on an album for fear of staining the rosewood table), and the seedy man signified that he had taken possession of the furniture in execution for a judgment debt. Another seedy man was in the dining-room, reading a newspaper, and drinking gin; he informed Mrs. Walker that he was the representative of another judgment debt and of another execution:—'There's another on 'em in the kitchen,' said the page, 'taking an inwentory of the furniture; and he swears he'll have you took up for swindling, for pawning the plate.'

'Sir,' said Mr. Woolsey, for that worthy man had conducted Morgiana home—'sir,' said he, shaking his stick at the young page, 'if you give any more of your impudence, I'll beat every button off your jacket:' and as there were some four hundred of these ornaments, the page was silent. It was a great mercy for Morgiana that the honest and faithful tailor had accompanied her. The good fellow had waited very patiently for her for an hour in the parlour or coffee-room of the lock-up house, knowing full well that she would want a protector on her way homewards; and his kindness will be more appreciated when it is stated that, during the time of his delay in the coffee-room, he had been subject to the entreaties, nay, to the insults, of Cornet Fipkin of the Blues, who was in prison at the suit of Linsey, Woolsey & Co., and who happened to be taking his breakfast in the apartment when his obdurate creditor entered it. The Cornet (a hero of eighteen, who stood at least five feet three in his boots, and owed fifteen thousand pounds) was so enraged at the obduracy of his creditor that he said he would have thrown him out of the window but for the bars which guarded it; and entertained serious thoughts of knocking the tailor's head off, but that the

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latter, putting his right leg forward and his fists in a proper attitude, told the young officer to 'come on;' on which the Cornet cursed the tailor for a 'snob,' and went back to his breakfast.

The execution people having taken charge of Mr. Walker's house, Mrs. Walker was driven to take refuge with her mamma near 'Sadler's Wells,' and the Captain remained comfortably lodged in the Fleet. He had some ready money, and with it managed to make his existence exceedingly comfortable. He lived with the best society of the place, consisting of several distinguished young noblemen and gentlemen. He spent the morning playing at fives and smoking cigars; the evening smoking cigars and dining comfortably. Cards came after dinner; and, as the Captain was an experienced player, and near a score of years older than most of his friends, he was generally pretty successful: indeed, if he had received all the money that was owed to him, he might have come out of prison and paid his creditors twenty shillings in the pound—that is, if he had been minded to do so. But there is no use in examining into that point too closely, for the fact is, young Fipkin only paid him forty pounds out of seven hundred for which he gave him I. O. U.'s; Algernon Deuceace not only did not pay him three hundred and twenty which he lost at blind hookey, but actually borrowed seven-and-sixpence in money from Walker, which has never been repaid to this day; and Lord Doublequits actually lost nineteen thousand pounds to him at heads and tails, which he never paid, pleading drunkenness and his minority. The reader may recollect a paragraph which went the round of the papers entitled—

'*Affair of Honour in the Fleet Prison.*—Yesterday morning (behind the pump in the second court) Lord D–bl–qu–ts and Captain H–w–rd W–lk–r (a near relative, we understand, of his Grace the Duke of N–rf–lk) had a hostile meeting and ex-

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changed two shots. These two young sprigs of nobility were attended to the ground by Major Flush, who, by the way, is *flush* no longer, and Captain Pam, late of the —— Dragoons. Play is said to have been the cause of the quarrel, and the gallant Captain is reported to have handled the noble lord's nose rather roughly at one stage of the transactions.'

When Morgiana at 'Sadler's Wells' heard the news, she was ready to faint with terror; and rushed to the Fleet Prison, and embraced her lord and master with her usual expansion and fits of tears: very much to that gentleman's annoyance, who happened to be in company with Pam and Flush at the time, and did not care that his handsome wife should be seen too much in the dubious precincts of the Fleet. He had at least so much shame about him, and had always rejected her entreaties to be allowed to inhabit the prison with him.

'It is enough,' would he say, casting his eyes heavenward, and with a most lugubrious countenance—'it is enough, Morgiana, that *I* should suffer, even though your thoughtlessness has been the cause of my ruin. But enough of *that!* I will not rebuke you for faults for which I know you are now repentant; and I never could bear to see you in the midst of the miseries of this horrible place. Remain at home with your mother, and let me drag on the weary days here alone. If you can get me any more of that pale sherry, my love, do. I require something to cheer me in solitude, and have found my chest very much relieved by that wine. Put more pepper and eggs, my dear, into the next veal-pie you make me. I can't eat the horrible messes in the coffee-room here.'

It was Walker's wish, I can't tell why, except that it is the wish of a great number of other persons in this strange world, to make his wife believe that he was wretched in mind and ill in health; and all assertions to this effect the simple creature received with numberless

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tears of credulity: she would go home to Mrs. Crump, and say how her darling Howard was pining away, how he was ruined for *her*, and with what angelic sweetness he bore his captivity. The fact is, he bore it with so much resignation that no other person in the world could see that he was unhappy. His life was undisturbed by duns; his day was his own from morning till night; his diet was good, his acquaintances jovial, his purse tolerably well supplied, and he had not one single care to annoy him.

Mrs. Crump and Woolsey, perhaps, received Morgiana's account of her husband's miseries with some incredulity. The latter was now a daily visitor to 'Sadler's Wells.' His love for Morgiana had become a warm fatherly generous regard for her; it was out of the honest fellow's cellar that the wine used to come which did so much good to Mr. Walker's chest; and he tried a thousand ways to make Morgiana happy.

A very happy day, indeed, it was when, returning from her visit to the Fleet, she found in her mother's sitting-room her dear grand rosewood piano, and every one of her music-books, which the kind-hearted tailor had purchased at a sale of Walker's effects. And I am not ashamed to say that Morgiana herself was so charmed, that when, as usual, Mr. Woolsey came to drink tea in the evening, she actually gave him a kiss; which frightened Mr. Woolsey, and made him blush exceedingly. She sat down, and played him that evening every one of the songs which he liked—the *old* songs—none of your Italian stuff. Podmore, the old music-master, was there too, and was delighted and astonished at the progress in singing which Morgiana had made; and when the little party separated, he took Mr. Woolsey by the hand, and said, 'Give me leave to tell you, sir, that you're a *trump*.'

'That he is,' said Canterfield, the first tragic; 'an honour to human nature. A man whose hand is open

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as day to melting charity, and whose heart ever melts at the tale of woman's distress.'

'Pooh, pooh, stuff and nonsense, sir,' said the tailor; but, upon my word, Mr. Canterfield's words were perfectly correct. I wish as much could be said in favour of Woolsey's old rival, Mr. Eglantine, who attended the sale too, but it was with a horrid kind of satisfaction at the thought that Walker was ruined. He bought the yellow satin sofa before mentioned, and transferred it to what he calls his 'sitting-room,' where it is to this day, bearing many marks of the best bear's grease. Woolsey bid against Baroski for the piano very nearly up to the actual value of the instrument, when the artist withdrew from competition; and when he was sneering at the ruin of Mr. Walker, the tailor sternly interrupted him by saying, 'What the deuce are *you* sneering at? You did it, sir; and you're paid every shilling of your claim, ain't you?' On which Baroski turned round to Miss Larkins, and said, Mr. Woolsey was a 'snop;' the very word, though pronounced somewhat differently, which the gallant Cornet Fipkin had applied to him.

Well; so he *was* a snob. But, vulgar as he was, I declare, for my part, that I have a greater respect for Mr. Woolsey than for any single nobleman or gentleman mentioned in this true history.

It will be seen from the names of Messrs. Canterfield and Podmore that Morgiana was again in the midst of the widow Crump's favourite theatrical society; and this, indeed, was the case. The widow's little room was hung round with the pictures which were mentioned at the commencement of the story as decorating the bar of the 'Bootjack;' and several times in a week she received her friends from 'The Wells,' and entertained them with such humble refreshments of tea and crumpets as her modest means permitted her to purchase. Among these persons Morgiana lived and sang quite as contentedly as she had ever done among the demireps of her husband's

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society; and, only she did not dare to own it to herself, was a great deal happier than she had been for many a day. Mrs. Captain Walker was still a great lady amongst them. Even in his ruin, Walker, the director of three companies, and the owner of the splendid pony-chaise, was to these simple persons an awful character; and when mentioned they talked with a great deal of gravity of his being in the country, and hoped Mrs. Captain W. had good news of him. They all knew he was in the Fleet; but had he not in prison fought a duel with a viscount? Montmorency (of the Norfolk Circuit) was in the Fleet too; and when Canterfield went to see poor Montey, the latter had pointed out Walker to his friend, who actually hit Lord George Tennison across the shoulders in play with a racket-bat; which event was soon made known to the whole green-room.

'They had me up one day,' said Montmorency, 'to sing a comic song, and give my recitations; and we had champagne and lobster-salad: *such* nobs:' added the player. 'Billingsgate and Vauxhall were there too, and left college at eight o'clock.'

When Morgiana was told of the circumstance by her mother, she hoped her dear Howard had enjoyed the evening, and was thankful that for once he could forget his sorrows. Nor, somehow, was she ashamed of herself for being happy afterwards, but gave way to her natural good-humour without repentance or self-rebuke. I believe, indeed (alas! why are we made acquainted with the same fact regarding ourselves long after it is past and gone?)—I believe these were the happiest days of Morgiana's whole life. She had no cares except the pleasant one of attending on her husband, an easy smiling temperament which made her regardless of to-morrow; and, add to this, a delightful hope relative to a certain interesting event which was about to occur, and which I shall not particularise further than by

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saying, that she was cautioned against too much singing by Mr. Squills, her medical attendant; and that widow Crump was busy making up a vast number of little caps and diminutive cambric shirts, such as delighted *grandmothers* are in the habit of fashioning. I hope this is as genteel a way of signifying the circumstance which was about to take place in the Walker family as Miss Prim herself could desire. Mrs. Walker's mother was about to become a grandmother. There's a phrase! The *Morning Post*, which says this story is vulgar, I'm sure cannot quarrel with *that*. I don't believe the whole *Court Guide* would convey an intimation more delicately.

Well, Mrs. Crump's little grandchild was born, entirely to the dissatisfaction, I must say, of his father; who, when the infant was brought to him in the Fleet, had him abruptly covered up in his cloak again, from which he had been removed by the jealous prison door-keepers: why, do you think? Walker had a quarrel with one of them, and the wretch persisted in believing that the bundle Mrs. Crump was bringing to her son-in-law was a bundle of disguised brandy!

'The brutes!' said the lady; 'and the father's a brute, too,' said she. 'He takes no more notice of me than if I was a kitchen-maid, and of Woolsey than if he was a leg of mutton—the dear blessed little cherub!'

Mrs. Crump was a mother-in-law; let us pardon her hatred of her daughter's husband.

The Woolsey compared in the above sentence both to a leg of mutton and a cherub, was not the eminent member of the firm of Linsey, Woolsey & Co., but the little baby, who was christened Howard Woolsey Walker, with the full consent of the father; who said the tailor was a deuced good fellow, and felt really obliged to him for the sherry, for a frock-coat which he let him have in prison, and for his kindness to Morgiana. The tailor loved the little boy with all his soul; he attended his mother to her churching, and the child to the font; and,

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as a present to his little godson on his christening, he sent two yards of the finest white kerseymere in his shop, to make him a cloak. The Duke had had a pair of inexpressibles off that very piece.

House furniture is bought and sold, music-lessons are given, children are born and christened, ladies are confined and churched—time, in other words, passes—and yet Captain Walker still remains in prison! Does it not seem strange that he should still languish there between palisaded walls near Fleet Market, and that he should not be restored to that active and fashionable world of which he was an ornament? The fact is, the Captain had been before the court for the examination of his debts; and the Commissioner, with a cruelty quite shameful towards a fallen man, had qualified his ways of getting money in most severe language, and had sent him back to prison again for the space of nine calendar months, an indefinite period, and until his accounts could be made up. This delay Walker bore like a philosopher, and, far from repining, was still the gayest fellow of the tennis-court, and the soul of the midnight carouse.

There is no use in raking up old stories, and hunting through files of dead newspapers, to know what were the specific acts which made the Commissioner so angry with Captain Walker. Many a rogue has come before the court, and passed through it since then; and I would lay a wager that Howard Walker was not a bit worse than his neighbours. But as he was not a lord, and as he had no friends on coming out of prison, and had settled no money on his wife, and had, as it must be confessed, an exceedingly bad character, it is not likely that the latter would be forgiven him when once more free in the world. For instance, when Doublequits left the Fleet, he was received with open arms by his family, and had two-and-thirty horses in his stables before a week was over. Pam, of the Dragoons, came out, and instantly got a place as government courier—a place found so

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good of late years (and no wonder, it is better pay than that of a colonel), that our noblemen and gentry eagerly press for it. Frank Hurricane was sent out as registrar of Tobago, or Sago, or Ticonderago; in fact, for a younger son of good family it is rather advantageous to get into debt twenty or thirty thousand pounds: you are sure of a good place afterwards in the colonies. Your friends are so anxious to get rid of you, that they will move heaven and earth to serve you. And so all the above companions of misfortune with Walker were speedily made comfortable; but *he* had no rich parents; his old father was dead in York Gaol. How was he to start in the world again? What friendly hand was there to fill his pocket with gold, and his cup with sparkling champagne? He was, in fact, an object of the greatest pity—for I know of no greater than a gentleman of his habits without the means of gratifying them. He must live well, and he has not the means. Is there a more pathetic case? As for a mere low beggar—some labourless labourer, or some weaver out of place—don't let us throw away our compassion upon *them*. Psha! they're accustomed to starve. They *can* sleep upon boards, or dine off a crust; whereas a gentleman would die in the same situation. I think this was poor Morgiana's way of reasoning. For Walker's cash in prison beginning presently to run low, and knowing quite well that the dear fellow could not exist there without the luxuries to which he had been accustomed, she borrowed money from her mother, until the poor old lady was *à sec*. She even confessed, with tears, to Woolsey, that she was in particular want of twenty pounds, to pay a poor milliner, whose debt she could not bear to put in her husband's schedule. And I need not say she carried the money to her husband, who might have been greatly benefited by it—only he had a bad run of luck at the cards; and how the deuce can a man help *that?*

Woolsey had repurchased for her one of the Cashmere

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shawls. She left it behind her one day at the Fleet prison, and some rascal stole it there; having the grace, however, to send Woolsey the ticket, signifying the place where it had been pawned. Who could the scoundrel have been? Woolsey swore a great oath, and fancied he knew; but if it was Walker himself (as Woolsey fancied, and probably as was the case) who made away with the shawl, being pressed thereto by necessity, was it fair to call him a scoundrel for so doing, and should we not rather laud the delicacy of his proceeding? He was poor: who can command the cards? But he did not wish his wife should know *how* poor: he could not bear that she should suppose him arrived at the necessity of pawning a shawl.

She who had such beautiful ringlets, of a sudden pleaded cold in the head, and took to wearing caps. One summer evening, as she and the baby and Mrs. Crump and Woolsey (let us say all four babies together) were laughing and playing in Mrs. Crump's drawing-room—playing the most absurd gambols, fat Mrs. Crump, for instance, hiding behind the sofa. Woolsey chuck-chucking, cock-a-doodle-dooing, and performing those indescribable freaks which gentlemen with philoprogenitive organs will execute in the company of children—in the midst of their play the baby gave a tug at his mother's cap; off it came—her hair was cut close to her head!

Morgiana turned as red as sealing-wax, and trembled very much; Mrs. Crump screamed, 'My child, where is your hair?' and Woolsey, bursting out with a most tremendous oath against Walker that would send Miss Prim into convulsions, put his handkerchief to his face, and actually wept. 'The infernal bubble-ubble-ackguard!' said he, roaring and clenching his fists.

As he had passed the Bower of Bloom a few days before, he saw Mossrose, who was combing out a jet-black ringlet, and held it up, as if for Woolsey's examination, with a peculiar grin. The tailor did not understand the

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joke, but he saw now what had happened. Morgiana had sold her hair for five guineas; she would have sold her arm had her husband bidden her. On looking in her drawers it was found she had sold almost all her wearing apparel; the child's clothes were all there, however. It was because her husband talked of disposing of a gilt coral that the child had, that she had parted with the locks which had formed her pride.

"I'll give you twenty guineas for that hair, you infamous fat coward,' roared the little tailor to Eglantine that evening. 'Give it up, or I'll kill you——'

'Mr. Mossrose! Mr. Mossrose!' shouted the perfumer.

'Vell, vatsh de matter, vatsh de row, fight avay, my boys; two to one on the tailor,' said Mr. Mossrose, much enjoying the sport (for Woolsey, striding through the shop without speaking to him, had rushed into the studio, where he plumped upon Eglantine).

'Tell him about that hair, sir.'

'That hair! Now keep yourself quiet, Mister Timble, and don't tink for to bully *me*. You mean Mrs. Valker's 'air? Vy, she sold it me.'

'And the more blackguard you for buying it! Will you take twenty guineas for it?'

'No,' said Mossrose.

'Twenty-five?'

'Can't,' said Mossrose.

'Hang it! will you take forty? There!'

'I vish I'd kep it,' said the Hebrew gentleman, with unfeigned regret. 'Eglantine dressed it this very night.'

'For Countess Baldenstiern, the Swedish Hambassador's lady,' says Eglantine (his Hebrew partner was by no means a favourite with the ladies, and only superintended the accounts of the concern). 'It's this very night at Devonshire 'Ouse, with four hostrich plumes, lappets, and trimmings. And now, Mr. Woolsey, I'll trouble you to apologise.'

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Mr. Woolsey did not answer, but walked up to Mr. Eglantine, and snapped his fingers so close under the perfumer's nose that the latter started back and seized the bell-rope. Mossrose burst out laughing, and the tailor walked majestically from the shop, with both hands stuck between the lappets of his coat.

'My dear,' said he to Morgiana a short time afterwards, 'you must not encourage that husband of yours in his extravagance, and sell the clothes off your poor back that he may feast and act the fine gentleman in prison.'

'It is his health, poor dear soul!' interposed Mrs. Walker: 'his chest. Every farthing of the money goes to the doctors, poor fellow!'

'Well, now listen: I am a rich man' (it was a great fib, for Woolsey's income, as a junior partner of the firm, was but a small one); 'I can very well afford to make him an allowance while he is in the Fleet, and have written to him to say so. But if you ever give him a penny, or sell a trinket belonging to you, upon my word and honour I will withdraw the allowance, and, though it would go to my heart, I'll never see you again. You wouldn't make me unhappy, would you?'

'I'd go on my knees to serve you, and Heaven bless you,' said the wife.

'Well, then, you must give me this promise.' And she did.

'And now,' said he, 'your mother, and Podmore, and I have been talking over matters, and we've agreed that you may make a very good income for yourself; though, to be sure, I wish it could have been managed any other way; but needs must, you know. You're the finest singer in the universe.'

'La!' said Morgiana, highly delighted.

'*I* never heard anything like you, though I'm no judge. Podmore says he is sure you will do very well, and has no doubt you might get very good engage-

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ments at concerts or on the stage; and as that husband will never do any good, and you have a child to support, sing you must.'

'Oh! how glad I should be to pay his debts and repay all he has done for me,' cried Mrs. Walker. 'Think of his giving two hundred guineas to Mr. Baroski to have me taught. Was not that kind of him? Do you *really* think I should succeed?'

'There's Miss Larkins has succeeded.'

'The little high-shouldered vulgar thing!' says Morgiana. 'I'm sure I ought to succeed if *she* did.'

'She sing against Morgiana?' said Mrs. Crump. 'I'd like to see her, indeed! She ain't fit to snuff a candle to her.'

'I dare say not,' said the tailor, 'though I don't understand the thing myself: but if Morgiana can make a fortune, why shouldn't she?'

'Heaven knows we want it, Woolsey,' cried Mrs. Crump. 'And to see her on the stage was always the wish of my heart:' and so it had formerly been the wish of Morgiana; and now, with the hope of helping her husband and child, the wish became a duty, and she fell to practising once more from morning till night.

One of the most generous of men and tailors who ever lived now promised, if further instruction should be considered necessary (though that he could hardly believe possible), that he would lend Morgiana any sum required for the payment of lessons; and accordingly she once more betook herself, under Podmore's advice, to the singing school. Baroski's academy was, after the passages between them, out of the question, and she placed herself under the instruction of the excellent English composer Sir George Thrum, whose large and awful wife, Lady Thrum, dragon of virtue and propriety, kept watch over the master and the pupils, and was the sternest guardian of female virtue on or off any stage.

Morgiana came at a propitious moment. Baroski had

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launched Miss Larkins under the name of Ligonier. The Ligonier was enjoying considerable success, and was singing classical music to tolerable audiences; whereas Miss Butts, Sir George's last pupil, had turned out a complete failure, and the rival house was only able to make a faint opposition to the new star with Miss M'Whirter, who, though an old favourite, had lost her upper notes and her front teeth, and, the fact was, drew no longer.

Directly Sir George heard Mrs. Walker, he tapped Podmore, who accompanied her, on the waistcoat, and said, 'Poddy, thank you: we'll cut the orange boy's throat with that voice.' It was by the familiar title of orange boy that the great Baroski was known among his opponents.

'We'll crush him, Podmore,' said Lady Thrum, in her deep hollow voice. 'You may stop and dine.' And Podmore stayed to dinner, and ate cold mutton, and drank Marsala with the greatest reverence for the great English composer. The very next day Lady Thrum hired a pair of horses, and paid a visit to Mrs. Crump and her daughter at 'Sadler's Wells.'

All these things were kept profoundly secret from Walker, who received very magnanimously the allowance of two guineas a week which Woolsey made him, and, with the aid of the few shillings his wife could bring him, managed to exist as best he might. He did not dislike gin when he could get no claret, and the former liquor, under the name of 'tape,' used to be measured out pretty liberally in what was formerly Her Majesty's prison of the Fleet.

Morgiana pursued her studies under Thrum, and we shall hear in the next chapter how it was she changed her name to RAVENSWING.

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CHAPTER VII

IN WHICH MORGIANA ADVANCES TOWARDS FAME AND HONOUR, AND IN WHICH SEVERAL GREAT LITERARY CHARACTERS MAKE THEIR APPEARANCE

'We must begin, my dear madam,' said Sir George Thrum, 'by unlearning all that Mr. Baroski (of whom I do not wish to speak with the slightest disrespect) has taught you!'

Morgiana knew that every professor says as much, and submitted to undergo the study requisite for Sir George's system with perfect good grace. *Au fond*, as I was given to understand, the methods of the two artists were pretty similar; but as there was rivalry between them, and continual desertion of scholars from one school to another, it was fair for each to take all the credit he could get in the success of any pupil. If a pupil failed, for instance, Thrum would say Baroski had spoiled her irretrievably; while the German would regret 'Dat dat yong voman, who had a good organ, should have trown away her dime wid dat old Drum.' When one of these deserters succeeded, 'Yes, yes,' would either professor cry, 'I formed her; she owes her fortune to me.' Both of them thus, in future days, claimed the education of the famous Ravenswing; and even Sir George Thrum, though he wished to *écraser* the Ligonier, pretended that her present success was his work because once she had been brought by her mother, Mrs. Larkins, to sing for Sir George's approval.

When the two professors met it was with the most delighted cordiality on the part of both. 'Mein lieber Herr,' Thrum would say (with some malice), 'your sonata in X flat is divine.' 'Chevalier,' Baroski would reply, 'dat andante movement in W is worthy of

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Beethoven. I gif you my sacred honour,' and so forth. In fact, they loved each other as gentlemen in their profession always do.

The two famous professors conduct their academies on very opposite principles. Baroski writes ballet music; Thrum, on the contrary, says 'he cannot but deplore the dangerous fascinations of the dance,' and writes more for Exeter Hall and Birmingham. While Baroski drives a cab in the Park with a very suspicious Mademoiselle Léocadie, or Aménaïde, by his side, you may see Thrum walking to evening church with his lady, and hymns are sung there of his own composition. He belongs to the 'Athenæum Club,' he goes to the Levée once a year, he does everything that a respectable man should; and if, by the means of this respectability, he manages to make his little trade far more profitable than it otherwise would be, are we to quarrel with him for it?

Sir George, in fact, had every reason to be respectable. He had been a choir-boy at Windsor, had played to the old King's violoncello, had been intimate with him, and had received knighthood at the hand of his revered sovereign. He had a snuff-box which His Majesty gave him, and portraits of him and the young princes all over the house. He had also a foreign order (no other, indeed, than the Elephant and Castle of Kalbsbraten-Pumpernickel), conferred upon him by the Grand Duke when here with the allied sovereigns in 1814. With this ribbon round his neck, on gala days, and in a white waistcoat, the old gentleman looked splendid as he moved along in a blue coat with the Windsor button, and neat black small-clothes, and silk stockings. He lived in an old tall dingy house, furnished in the reign of George III., his beloved master, and not much more cheerful now than a family vault. They are awfully funereal, those ornaments of the close of the last century —tall gloomy horse-hair chairs, mouldy Turkey carpets with wretched druggets to guard them, little cracked

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sticking-plaster miniatures of people in *tours* and pig-tails over high-shouldered mantelpieces, two dismal urns on each side of a lanky sideboard, and in the midst a queer twisted receptacle for worn-out knives with green handles. Under the sideboard stands a cellaret that looks as if it held half a bottle of currant wine, and a shivering plate-warmer, that never could get any comfort out of the wretched old cramped grate yonder. Don't you know in such houses the grey gloom that hangs over the stairs, the dull-coloured old carpet that winds its way up the same, growing thinner, duller, and more threadbare as it mounts to the bedroom floors? There is something awful in the bedroom of a respectable old couple of sixty-five. Think of the old feathers, turbans, bugles, petticoats, pomatum-pots, spencers, white satin shoes, false fronts, the old flaccid boneless stays tied up in faded riband, the dusky fans, the old forty-years-old baby linen, the letters of Sir George when he was young, the doll of poor Maria who died in 1803, Frederick's first corduroy breeches, and the newspaper which contains the account of his distinguishing himself at the siege of Seringapatam. All these lie somewhere, damp and squeezed down into glum old presses and wardrobes. At that glass the wife has sat many times these fifty years; in that old morocco bed her children were born. Where are they now? Fred the brave captain, and Charles the saucy colleger: there hangs a drawing of him done by Mr. Beechey, and that sketch by Cosway was the very likeness of Louisa before——

'Mr. Fitz-Boodle! for Heaven's sake come down. What are you doing in a lady's bedroom?'

'The fact is, madam, I had no business there in life; but, having had quite enough wine with Sir George, my thoughts had wandered upstairs into the sanctuary of female excellence, where your Ladyship nightly reposes. You do not sleep so well now as in old days, though there is no patter of little steps to wake you overhead.'

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They call that room the nursery still, and the little wicket still hangs at the upper stairs: it has been there for forty years—*bon Dieu!* Can't you see the ghosts of little faces peering over it? I wonder whether they get up in the night as the moonlight shines into the blank vacant old room, and play there solemnly with little ghostly horses, and the spirits of dolls, and tops that turn and turn but don't hum.

Once more, sir, come down to the lower storey—that is, to the Morgiana story—with which the above sentences have no more to do than this morning's leading article in *The Times*; only it was at this house of Sir George Thrum's that I met Morgiana. Sir George, in old days, had instructed some of the female members of our family, and I recollect cutting my fingers as a child with one of those attenuated green-handled knives in the queer box yonder.

In those days Sir George Thrum was the first great musical teacher of London, and the royal patronage brought him a great number of fashionable pupils, of whom Lady Fitz-Boodle was one. It was a long long time ago: in fact, Sir George Thrum was old enough to remember persons who had been present at Mr. Braham's first appearance, and the old gentleman's days of triumph had been those of Billington and Incledon, Catalani and Madame Storace.

He was the author of several operas ('The Camel Driver,' 'Britons Alarmed; or, the Siege of Bergen-op-Zoom,' &c., &c.), and, of course, of songs which had considerable success in their day, but are forgotten now and are as much faded and out of fashion as those old carpets which we have described in the professor's house, and which were, doubtless, very brilliant once. But such is the fate of carpets, of flowers, of music, of men, and of the most admirable novels—even this story will not be alive for many centuries. Well, well, why struggle against Fate?

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But, though his heyday of fashion was gone, Sir George still held his place among the musicians of the old school, conducted occasionally at the Ancient Concerts and the Philharmonic, and his glees are still favourites after public dinners, and are sung by those old bacchanalians, in chestnut wigs, who attend for the purpose of amusing the guests on such occasions of festivity. The great old people at the gloomy old concerts before mentioned always pay Sir George marked respect; and indeed, from the old gentleman's peculiar behaviour to his superiors, it is impossible they should not be delighted with him, so he leads at almost every one of the concerts in the old-fashioned houses in town.

Becomingly obsequious to his superiors, he is with the rest of the world properly majestic, and has obtained no small success by his admirable and undeviating respectability. Respectability has been his great card through life; ladies can trust their daughters at Sir George Thrum's academy. 'A good musician, madam,' says he to the mother of a new pupil, 'should not only have a fine ear, a good voice, and an indomitable industry, but, above all, a faultless character—faultless, that is, as far as our poor nature will permit. And you will remark that those young persons with whom your lovely daughter, Miss Smith, will pursue her musical studies, are all, in a moral point of view, as spotless as that charming young lady. How should it be otherwise? I have been myself the father of a family; I have been honoured with the intimacy of the wisest and best of kings, my late sovereign George III., and I can proudly show an example of decorum to my pupils in my Sophia. Mrs. Smith, I have the honour of introducing to you my Lady Thrum.'

The old lady would rise at this, and make a gigantic curtsey, such a one as had begun the minuet at Ranelagh fifty years ago; and, the introduction ended, Mrs. Smith would retire, after having seen the portraits of the princes,

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his late Majesty's snuff-box and a piece of music which he used to play, noted by himself—Mrs. Smith, I say, would drive back to Baker Street, delighted to think that her Frederica had secured so eligible and respectable a master. I forgot to say that, during the interview between Mrs. Smith and Sir George, the latter would be called out of his study by his black servant, and my Lady Thrum would take that opportunity of mentioning when he was knighted, and how he got his foreign order, and deploring the sad condition of *other* musical professors, and the dreadful immorality which sometimes arose in consequence of their laxness. Sir George was a good deal engaged to dinners in the season, and if invited to dine with a nobleman, as he might possibly be on the day when Mrs. Smith requested the honour of his company, he would write back 'that he should have had the sincerest happiness in waiting upon Mrs. Smith in Baker Street, if, previously, my Lord Tweedledale had not been so kind as to engage him.' This letter, of course, shown by Mrs. Smith to her friends, was received by them with proper respect; and thus, in spite of age and new fashions, Sir George still reigned pre-eminent for a mile round Cavendish Square. By the young pupils of the academy he was called Sir Charles Grandison; and, indeed, fully deserved this title on account of the indomitable respectability of his whole actions.

It was under this gentleman that Morgiana made her *début* in public life. I do not know what arrangements may have been made between Sir George Thrum and his pupil regarding the profits which were to accrue to the former from engagements procured by him for the latter; but there was, no doubt, an understanding between them. For Sir George, respectable as he was, had the reputation of being extremely clever at a bargain; and Lady Thrum herself, in her great high-tragedy way, could purchase a pair of soles or select a leg of mutton with the best housekeeper in London.

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When, however, Morgiana had been for some six months under his tuition, he began, for some reason or other, to be exceedingly hospitable, and invited his friends to numerous entertainments: at one of which, as I have said, I had the pleasure of meeting Mrs. Walker.

Although the worthy musician's dinners were not good, the old knight had some excellent wine in his cellar, and his arrangement of his party deserves to be commended.

For instance, he meets me and Bob Fitz-Urse in Pall Mall, at whose paternal house he was also a visitor. 'My dear young gentlemen,' says he, 'will you come and dine with a poor musical composer? I have some Comet hock, and, what is more curious to you perhaps, as men of wit, one or two of the great literary characters of London whom you would like to see—quite curiosities, my dear young friends.' And we agreed to go.

To the literary men he says: 'I have a little quiet party at home: Lord Roundtowers, the Honourable Mr. Fitz-Urse of the Life Guards, and a few more. Can you tear yourself away from the war of wits, and take a quiet dinner with a few mere men about town?'

The literary men instantly purchase new satin stocks and white gloves, and are delighted to fancy themselves members of the world of fashion. Instead of inviting twelve Royal Academicians, or a dozen authors, or a dozen men of science to dinner, as his Grace the Duke of —— and the Right Honourable Sir Robert —— are in the habit of doing once a year, this plan of fusion is the one they should adopt. Not invite all artists, as they would invite all farmers to a rent-dinner; but they should have a proper commingling of artists and men of the world. There is one of the latter whose name is George Savage Fitz-Boodle, who—— But let us return to Sir George Thrum.

Fitz-Urse and I arrive at the dismal old house, and are conducted up the staircase by a black servant, who

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shouts out, 'Missa Fiss-Boodle—the *Honourable* Missa Fiss-Urse!' It was evident that Lady Thrum had instructed the swarthy groom of the chambers (for there is nothing particularly honourable in my friend Fitz's face that I know of, unless an abominable squint may be said to be so). Lady Thrum, whose figure is something like that of the shot-tower opposite Waterloo Bridge, makes a majestic inclination and a speech to signify her pleasure at receiving under her roof two of the children of Sir George's best pupils. A lady in black velvet is seated by the old fireplace, with whom a stout gentleman in an exceedingly light coat and ornamental waistcoat is talking very busily. 'The great star of the night,' whispers our host. 'Mrs. Walker, gentlemen—the RAVENSWING! She is talking to the famous Mr. Slang, of the —— Theatre.'

'Is she a fine singer?' said Fitz-Urse. 'She's a very fine woman.'

'My dear young friends, you shall hear to-night! I, who have heard every fine voice in Europe, confidently pledge my respectability that the Ravenswing is equal to them all. She has the graces, sir, of a Venus with the mind of a Muse. She is a siren, sir, without the dangerous qualities of one. She is hallowed, sir, by her misfortunes as by her genius; and I am proud to think that my instructions have been the means of developing the wondrous qualities that were latent within her until now.'

'You don't say so!' says gobemouche Fitz-Urse.

Having thus indoctrinated Mr. Fitz-Urse, Sir George takes another of his guests, and proceeds to work upon him. 'My dear Mr. Bludyer, how do you do? Mr. Fitz-Boodle, Mr. Bludyer, the brilliant and acomplished wit, whose sallies in the *Tomahawk* delight us every Saturday. Nay, no blushes, my dear sir; you are very wicked, but oh! *so* pleasant. Well, Mr. Bludyer, I am glad to see you, sir, and hope you will have a favourable

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opinion of our genius, sir. As I was saying to Mr. Fitz-Boodle, she has the graces of a Venus with the mind of a Muse. She is a siren, without the dangerous qualities of one,' &c. This little speech was made to half-a-dozen persons in the course of the evening—persons, for the most part, connected with the public journals or the theatrical world. There was Mr. Squinny, the editor of the *Flowers of Fashion*; Mr. Desmond Mulligan, the poet, and reporter for a morning paper; and other worthies of their calling. For though Sir George is a respectable man, and as high-minded and moral an old gentleman as ever wore knee-buckles, he does not neglect the little arts of popularity, and can condescend to receive very queer company if need be.

For instance, at the dinner-party at which I had the honour of assisting, and at which, on the right hand of Lady Thrum, sat the *obligé* nobleman, whom the Thrums were a great deal too wise to omit (the sight of a lord does good to us commoners, or why else should we be so anxious to have one?). In the second place of honour, and on her ladyship's left hand, sat Mr. Slang, the manager of one of the theatres; a gentleman whom my Lady Thrum would scarcely, but for a great necessity's sake, have been induced to invite to her table. He had the honour of leading Mrs. Walker to dinner, who looked splendid in black velvet and turban, full of health and smiles.

Lord Roundtowers is an old gentleman who has been at the theatres five times a week for these fifty years, a living dictionary of the stage, recollecting every actor and actress who has appeared upon it for half a century. He perfectly well remembered Miss Delancy in Morgiana; he knew what had become of Ali Baba, and how Cassim had left the stage, and was now the keeper of a public-house. All this store of knowledge he kept quietly to himself, or only delivered in confidence to his next neighbour in the intervals of the banquet, which he

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enjoys prodigiously. He lives at an hotel: if not invited to dine, eats a mutton-chop very humbly at his club, and finishes his evening after the play at Crockford's, whither he goes not for the sake of the play, but of the supper there. He is described in the *Court Guide* as of 'Simmers' Hotel,' and of Roundtowers, county Cork. It is said that the round towers really exist. But he has not been in Ireland since the rebellion; and his property is so hampered with ancestral mortgages, and rent-charges, and annuities, that his income is barely sufficient to provide the modest mutton-chop before alluded to. He has, any time these fifty years, lived in the wickedest company in London, and is, withal, as harmless, mild, good-natured, innocent an old gentleman as can readily be seen.

'Roundy,' shouts the elegant Mr. Slang, across the table, with a voice which makes Lady Thrum shudder, 'Tuff, a glass of wine.'

My Lord replies meekly, 'Mr. Slang, I shall have very much pleasure. What shall it be?'

'There is Madeira near you, my Lord,' says my Lady, pointing to a tall thin decanter of the fashion of the year.

'Madeira! Marsala, by Jove, your Ladyship means!' shouts Mr. Slang. 'No, no, old birds are not caught with chaff. Thrum, old boy, let's have some of your Comet hock.'

'My Lady Thrum, I believe that *is* Marsala,' says the knight, blushing a little, in reply to a question from his Sophia. 'Ajax, the hock to Mr. Slang.'

'I'm in that,' yells Bludyer from the end of the table. 'My Lord, I'll join you.'

'Mr. ——, I beg your pardon—I shall be very happy to take wine with you, sir.'

'It is Mr. Bludyer, the celebrated newspaper writer,' whispers Lady Thrum.

'Bludyer, Bludyer? A very clever man, I dare say.

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He has a very loud voice, and reminds me of Brett. Does your Ladyship remember Brett, who played the "Fathers" at the Haymarket in 1802?'

'What an old stupid Roundtowers is!' says Slang archly, nudging Mrs. Walker in the side. 'How's Walker, eh?'

'My husband is in the country,' replied Mrs. Walker hesitatingly.

'Gammon! *I* know where he is! Law bless you!—don't blush. I've been there myself a dozen times. We were talking about quod, Lady Thrum. Were you ever in college?'

'I was at the Commemoration at Oxford in 1814, when the sovereigns were there, and at Cambridge when Sir George received his degree of Doctor of Music.'

'Laud, Laud, *that's* not the college *we* mean.'

'There is also the college in Gower Street, where my grandson——'

'This is the college in *Queer Street*, ma'am, haw, haw! Mulligan, you divvle (in an Irish accent), a glass of wine with you. Wine here, you waiter! What's your name, you black nigger? 'Possum up a gum-tree, eh? Fill him up. Dere he go' (imitating the Mandingo manner of speaking English).

In this agreeable way would Mr. Slang rattle on, speedily making himself the centre of the conversation, and addressing graceful familiarities to all the gentlemen and ladies round him.

It was good to see how the little knight, the most moral and calm of men, was compelled to receive Mr. Slang's stories, and the frightened air with which, at the conclusion of one of them, he would venture upon a commendatory grin. His lady, on her part too, had been laboriously civil; and, on the occasion on which I had the honour of meeting this gentleman and Mrs. Walker, it was the latter who gave the signal for withdrawing to the lady of the house, by saying, 'I think,

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Lady Thrum, it is quite time for us to retire.' Some exquisite joke of Mr. Slang's was the cause of this abrupt disappearance. But, as they went upstairs to the drawing-room, Lady Thrum took occasion to say, 'My dear, in the course of your profession you will have to submit to many such familiarities on the part of persons of low breeding, such as I fear Mr. Slang is. But let me caution you against giving way to your temper as you did. Did you not perceive that *I* never allowed him to see my inward dissatisfaction? And I make it a particular point that you should be very civil to him to-night. Your interests—our interests—depend upon it.'

'And are my interests to make me civil to a wretch like that?'

'Mrs. Walker, would you wish to give lessons in morality and behaviour to Lady Thrum?' said the old lady, drawing herself up with great dignity. It was evident that she had a very strong desire indeed to conciliate Mr. Slang; and hence I have no doubt that Sir George was to have a considerable share of Morgiana's earnings.

Mr. Bludyer, the famous editor of the *Tomahawk*, whose jokes Sir George pretended to admire so much (Sir George who never made a joke in his life), was a press bravo of considerable talent and no principle, and who, to use his own words, would 'back himself for a slashing article against any man in England!' He would not only write, but fight on a pinch; was a good scholar, and as savage in his manner as with his pen. Mr. Squinny is of exactly the opposite school, as delicate as milk-and-water, harmless in his habits, fond of the flute when the state of his chest will allow him, a great practiser of waltzing and dancing in general, and in his journal mildly malicious. He never goes beyond the bounds of politeness, but manages to insinuate a great deal that is disagreeable to an author in the course of

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twenty lines of criticism. Personally he is quite respectable, and lives with two maiden aunts at Brompton. Nobody, on the contrary, knows where Mr. Bludyer lives. He has houses of call, mysterious taverns where he may be found at particular hours by those who need him, and where panting publishers are in the habit of hunting him up. For a bottle of wine and a guinea he will write a page of praise or abuse of any man living, or on any subject, or on any line of politics. 'Hang it, sir!' says he, 'pay me enough and I will write down my own father!' According to the state of his credit, he is dressed either almost in rags or else in the extremest flush of the fashion. With the latter attire he puts on a haughty and aristocratic air, and would slap a duke on the shoulder. If there is one thing more dangerous than to refuse to lend him a sum of money when he asks for it, it is to lend it to him; for he never pays, and never pardons a man to whom he owes. 'Walker refused to cash a bill for me,' he had been heard to say, 'and I'll do for his wife when she comes out on the stage!' Mrs. Walker and Sir George Thrum were in an agony about the *Tomahawk*; hence the latter's invitation to Mr. Bludyer. Sir George was in a great tremor about the *Flowers of Fashion*, hence his invitation to Mr. Squinny. Mr. Squinny was introduced to Lord Roundtowers and Mr. Fitz-Urse as one of the most delightful and talented of our young men of genius; and Fitz, who believes everything any one tells him, was quite pleased to have the honour of sitting near the live editor of a paper. I have reason to think that Mr. Squinny himself was no less delighted: I saw him giving his card to Fitz-Urse at the end of the second course.

No particular attention was paid to Mr. Desmond Mulligan. Political enthusiasm is his forte. He lives and writes in a rapture. He is, of course, a member of an Inn of Court, and greatly addicted to after-dinner-

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speaking as a preparation for the bar, where as a young man of genius he hopes one day to shine. He is almost the only man to whom Bludyer is civil; for, if the latter will fight doggedly when there is a necessity for so doing, the former fights like an Irishman, and has a pleasure in it. He has been 'on the ground' I don't know how many times, and quitted his country on account of a quarrel with Government regarding certain articles published by him in the *Phœnix* newspaper. With the third bottle, he becomes overpoweringly great on the wrongs of Ireland, and at that period generally volunteers a couple or more of Irish melodies, selecting the most melancholy in the collection. At five in the afternoon, you are sure to see him about the House of Commons, and he knows the 'Reform Club' (he calls it the Refawrum) as well as if he were a member. It is curious for the contemplative mind to mark those mysterious hangers-on of Irish members of Parliament—strange runners and aides-de-camp which all the honourable gentlemen appear to possess. Desmond, in his political capacity is one of these, and besides his calling as reporter to a newspaper, is 'our well-informed correspondent' of that famous Munster paper, the *Green Flag of Skibbereen.*

With Mr. Mulligan's qualities and history I only became subsequently acquainted. On the present evening he made but a brief stay at the dinner-table, being compelled by his professional duties to attend the House of Commons.

The above formed the party with whom I had the honour to dine. What other repasts Sir George Thrum may have given, what assemblies of men of mere science he may have invited to give their opinion regarding his prodigy, what other editors of papers he may have pacified or rendered favourable, who knows? On the present occasion, we did not quit the dinner-table until Mr. Slang the manager was considerably excited by wine,

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and music had been heard for some time in the drawing-room overhead during our absence. An addition had been made to the Thrum party by the arrival of several persons to spend the evening,—a man to play on the violin between the singing, a youth to play on the piano, Miss Horsman to sing with Mrs. Walker, and other scientific characters. In a corner sat a red-faced old lady, of whom the mistress of the mansion took little notice; and a gentleman with a royal button, who blushed and looked exceedingly modest.

'Hang me!' says Mr. Bludyer, who had perfectly good reasons for recognising Mr. Woolsey, and who on this day chose to assume his aristocratic air; 'there' a tailor in the room! What do they mean by asking *me* to meet tradesmen?'

'Delancy, my dear,' cries Slang, entering the room with a leer, 'how's your precious health? Give us your hand! When *are* we to be married? Make room for me on the sofa, that's a duck!'

'Get along, Slang,' says Mrs. Crump, addressed by the manager by her maiden name (artists generally drop the title of honour which people adopt in the world, and call each other by their simple surnames)—'get along, Slang, or I'll tell Mrs. S.!' The enterprising manager replies by sportively striking Mrs. Crump on the side a blow which causes a great giggle from the lady insulted, and a most good-humoured threat to box Slang's ears. I fear very much that Morgiana's mother thought Mr. Slang an exceedingly gentlemanlike and agreeable person; besides, she was eager to have his good opinion of Mrs. Walker's singing.

The manager stretched himself out with much gracefulness on the sofa, supporting two little dumpy legs encased in varnished boots on a chair.

'Ajax, some tea to Mr. Slang,' said my lady, looking towards that gentleman with a countenance expressive of some alarm, I thought.

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'That's right, Ajax, my black prince!' exclaimed Slang, when the negro brought the required refreshment; 'and now I suppose you'll be wanted in the orchestra yonder. Don't Ajax play the cymbals, Sir George?'

'Ha, ha, ha! very good—capital!' answered the knight, exceedingly frightened; 'but ours is not a *military* band. Miss Horsman, Mr. Craw, my dear Mrs. Ravenswing, shall we begin the trio? Silence, gentlemen, if you please; it is a little piece from my opera of the "Brigand's Bride." Miss Horsman takes the Page's part, Mr. Craw is Stiletto the Brigand, my accomplished pupil is the Bride;' and the music began.

'THE BRIDE.

'My heart with joy is beating,
My eyes with tears are dim;

'THE PAGE.

'Her heart with joy is beating
Her eyes are fixed on him;

'THE BRIGAND.

'My heart with rage is beating,
In blood my eyeballs swim!'

What may have been the merits of the music or the singing, I, of course, cannot guess. Lady Thrum sat opposite the tea-cups, nodding her head and beating time very gravely. Lord Roundtowers, by her side, nodded his head too, for awhile, and then fell asleep. I should have done the same but for the manager, whose actions were worthy of remark. He sang with all the three singers, and a great deal louder than any of them; he shouted bravo! or hissed as he thought proper; he criticised all the points of Mrs. Walker's person.

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'She'll do, Crump, she'll do—a splendid arm—you'll see her eyes in the shilling gallery! What sort of a foot has she? She's five feet three, if she's an inch! Bravo—slap up—capital—hurrah!' And he concluded by saying, with the aid of the Ravenswing, he would put Ligonier's nose out of joint!'

The enthusiasm of Mr. Slang almost reconciled Lady Thrum to the abruptness of his manners, and even caused Sir George to forget that his chorus had been interrupted by the obstreperous familiarity of the manager.

'And what do *you* think, Mr. Bludyer,' said the tailor, delighted that his *protégée* should be thus winning all hearts: 'isn't Mrs. Walker a tip-top singer, eh, sir?'

'I think she's a very bad one, Mr. Woolsey,' said the illustrious author, wishing to abbreviate all communications with a tailor to whom he owed forty pounds.

'Then, sir,' says Mr. Woolsey fiercely, 'I'll—I'll thank you to pay me my little bill!'

It is true there was no connection between Mrs. Walker's singing and Woolsey's little bill; that the '*Then*, sir,' was perfectly illogical on Woolsey's part; but it was a very happy hit for the future fortunes of Mrs. Walker. Who knows what would have come of her *début* but for that 'Then, sir,' and whether a 'smashing article' from the *Tomahawk* might not have ruined her for ever?

'Are you a relation of Mrs. Walker's?' said Mr. Bludyer, in reply to the angry tailor.

'What's that to you, whether I am or not?' replied Woolsey fiercely. 'But I'm the friend of Mrs. Walker, sir; proud am I to say so, sir; and, as the poet says, sir, "a little learning's a dangerous thing," sir; and I think a man who don't pay his bills may keep his tongue quiet at least, sir, and not abuse a lady, sir, whom everybody else praises, sir. You shan't humbug *me* any more,

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sir; you shall hear from my attorney to-morrow, so mark that!'

'Hush, my dear Mr. Woolsey,' cried the literary man, 'don't make a noise; come into this window: is Mrs. Walker *really* a friend of yours?'

'I've told you so, sir.'

'Well, in that case, I shall do my utmost to serve her; and, look you, Woolsey, any article you choose to send about her to the *Tomahawk* I promise you I'll put in.'

'*Will* you, though? then we'll say nothing about the little bill.'

'You may do on that point,' answered Bludyer haughtily, 'exactly as you please. I am not to be frightened from my duty, mind that; and mind, too, that I can write a slashing article better than any man in England: I could crush her by ten lines.'

The tables were now turned, and it was Woolsey's turn to be alarmed.

'Pooh; pooh! I *was* angry,' said he, 'because you abused Mrs. Walker, who's an angel on earth; but I'm very willing to apologise. I say—come—let me take your measure for some new clothes, eh! Mr. B.!'

'I'll come to your shop,' answered the literary man, quite appeased. 'Silence! they're beginning another song.'

The songs, which I don't attempt to describe (and, upon my word and honour, as far as *I* can understand matters, I believe to this day that Mrs. Walker was only an ordinary singer)—the songs lasted a great deal longer than I liked; but I was nailed, as it were, to the spot, having agreed to sup at Knightsbridge barracks with Fitz-Urse, whose carriage was ordered at eleven o'clock.

'My dear Mr. Fitz-Boodle,' said our old host to me, 'you can do me the greatest service in the world.'

'Speak, sir!' said I.

'Will you ask your honourable and gallant friend, the Captain, to drive home Mr. Squinny to Brompton?'

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'Can't Mr. Squinny get a cab?'

Sir George looked particularly arch. 'Generalship, my dear young friend—a little harmless generalship. Mr. Squinny will not give much for *my* opinion of my pupil, but he will value very highly the opinion of the Honourable Mr. Fitz-Urse.'

For a moral man, was not the little knight a clever fellow? He had bought Mr. Squinny for a dinner worth ten shillings, and for a ride in a carriage with a lord's son. Squinny was carried to Brompton, and set down at his aunt's door, delighted with his new friends, and exceedingly sick with a cigar they had made him smoke.

CHAPTER VIII

IN WHICH MR. WALKER SHOWS GREAT PRUDENCE AND FORBEARANCE

THE describing of all these persons does not advance Morgiana's story much. But, perhaps, some country readers are not acquainted with the class of persons by whose printed opinions they are guided, and are simple enough to imagine that mere merit will make a reputation on the stage or elsewhere. The making of a theatrical success is a much more complicated and curious thing than such persons fancy it to be. Immense are the pains taken to get a good word from Mr. This of the *Star*, or Mr. That of the *Courier*, to propitiate the favour of the critic of the day, and get the editors of the metropolis into a good humour,—above all, to have the name of the person to be puffed perpetually before the public. Artists cannot be advertised like Macassar oil or blacking, and they want it to the full as much; hence endless ingenuity must be practised in order to keep the popular attention awake. Suppose a great actor moves

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from London to Windsor, the *Brentford Champion* must state that 'Yesterday Mr. Blazes and suite passed rapidly through our city; the celebrated comedian is engaged, we hear, at Windsor, to give some of his inimitable readings of our great national bard to the *most illustrious audience* in the realm.' This piece of intelligence the *Hammersmith Observer* will question the next week, as thus:—'A contemporary, the *Brentford Champion*, says that Blazes is engaged to give Shakspearian readings at Windsor to 'the most illustrious audience in the realm.' We question this fact very much. We would, indeed, that it were true; but *the most illustrious audience* in the realm prefer *foreign* melodies to *the native wood-notes wild* of the sweet song-bird of Avon. Mr. Blazes is simply gone to Eton, where his son, Master Massinger Blazes, is suffering, we regret to hear, under a severe attack of the chicken-pox. This complaint (incident to youth) has raged, we understand, with frightful virulence in Eton School.'

And if, after the above paragraphs, some London paper chooses to attack the folly of the provincial press, which talks of Mr. Blazes, and chronicles his movements, as if he were a crowned head, what harm is done! Blazes can write in his own name to the London journal, and say that it is not *his* fault if provincial journals choose to chronicle his movements, and that he was far from wishing that the afflictions of those who are dear to him should form the subject of public comment, and be held up to public ridicule. 'We had no intention of hurting the feelings of an estimable public servant,' writes the editor; 'and our remarks on the chicken-pox were general, not personal. We sincerely trust that Master Massinger Blazes has recovered from that complaint, and that he may pass through the measles, the whooping-cough, the fourth form, and all other diseases to which youth is subject, with comfort to himself, and credit to his parents and teachers.' And his next

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appearance on the stage after this controversy, a British public calls for Blazes three times after the play; and somehow there is sure to be some one with a laurel-wreath in a stage-box, who flings that chaplet at the inspired artist's feet.

I don't know how it was, but before the *début* of Morgiana the English press began to heave and throb in a convulsive manner, as if indicative of the near birth of some great thing. For instance, you read in one paper,—

'*Anecdote of Karl Maria Von Weber.*—When the author of "Oberon" was in England, he was invited by a noble duke to dinner, and some of the most celebrated of our artists were assembled to meet him. The signal being given to descend to the *salle-à-manger*, the German composer was invited by his noble host (a bachelor) to lead the way. "Is it not the fashion in your country," said he simply, "for the man of the first eminence to take the first place? Here is one whose genius entitles him to be first *anywhere*." And so saying, he pointed to our admirable English composer, Sir George Thrum. The two musicians were friends to the last, and Sir George has still the identical piece of rosin which the author of the "Freischütz" gave him.'—*The Moon* (morning paper), June 2.

'*George III. a Composer.*—Sir George Thrum has in his possession the score of an air, the words from "Samson Agonistes," an autograph of the late revered monarch. We hear that that excellent composer has in store for us not only an opera, but a pupil, with whose transcendent merits the *élite* of our aristocracy are already familiar.'—*Ibid.*, June 5.

'*Music with a Vengeance.*—The march to the sound of which the 49th and 75th regiments rushed up the breach of Badajoz was the celebrated air from "Britons Alarmed; or, The Siege of Bergen-op-Zoom," by our famous English composer, Sir George Thrum. Marshal Davoust said that the French line never stood when that air was performed to the charge of the bayonet. We hear the veteran musician has an opera now

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about to appear, and have no doubt that *Old England* will now, as then, show its superiority over *all* foreign opponents.' —*Albion.*

'We have been accused of preferring the *produit* of the *étranger* to the talent of our own native shores: but those who speak so, little know us. We are *fanatici per la musica* wherever it be, and welcome merit, *dans chaque pays du monde.* What do we say? *Le mérite n'a point de pays*, as Napoleon said; and Sir George Thrum (Chevalier de l'Ordre de l'Eléphant et Château de Kalbsbraten-Pumpernickel) is a maestro whose fame *appartient à l'Europe.*

'We have just heard the lovely *élève*, whose rare qualities the Cavaliere has brought to perfection,—we have heard THE RAVENSWING (*pourquoi cacher un nom que demain un monde va saluer?*), and a creature more beautiful and gifted never bloomed before *dans nos climats.* She sang the delicious duet of the "Nabucodonosore," with Count Pizzicato, with a *bellezza*, a *grandezza*, a *raggio*, that excited in the bosom of the audience a corresponding *furore;* her *scherzando* was exquisite, though we confess we thought the concluding *fioritura* in the passage in Y flat a leetle, a very leetle *sforzata.* Surely the words,

"Giorno d'orrore,
Delire, dolore,
Nabucodonosore,"

should be given *andante*, and not *con strepito:* but this is a *faute bien légère* in the midst of such unrivalled excellence, and only mentioned here that we may have *something* to criticise.

'We hear that the enterprising *impresario* of one of the royal theatres has made an engagement with the Diva; and, if we have a regret, it is that she should be compelled to sing in the unfortunate language of our rude northern clime, which does not *prêter* itself near so well to the *bocca* of the *cantatrice* as do the mellifluous accents of the Lingua Toscana, the *langue par excellence* of song.

'The Ravenswing's voice is a magnificent contra-basso of nine octaves,' &c.—*Flowers of Fashion*, June 10.

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'Old Thrum, the composer, is bringing out an opera and a pupil. The opera is good, the pupil first-rate. The opera will do much more than compete with the infernal twaddle and disgusting slip-slop of Donizetti, and the milk-and-water fools who imitate him: it will (and we ask the readers of the *Tomahawk*, were we EVER mistaken?) surpass all these; it is *good*, of downright English stuff. The airs are fresh and pleasing, the choruses large and noble, the instrumentation solid and rich, the music is carefully written. We wish old Thrum and his opera well.

'His pupil is a SURE CARD, a splendid woman, and a splendid singer. She is so handsome that she might sing as much out of tune as Miss Ligonier, and the public would forgive her; and sings so well, that were she as ugly as the aforesaid Ligonier, the audience would listen to her. The Ravenswing, that is her fantastical theatrical name (her real name is the same with that of a notorious scoundrel in the Fleet, who invented the Panama swindle, the Pontine Marshes' swindle, the Soap swindle—*how are you off for soap now*, Mr. W-lk-r?) —the Ravenswing, we say, will do. Slang has engaged her at thirty guineas per week, and she appears next month in Thrum's opera, of which the words are written by a great ass with some talent—we mean Mr. Mulligan.

'There is a foreign fool in the *Flowers of Fashion* who is doing his best to disgust the public by his filthy flattery. It is enough to make one sick. Why is the foreign beast not kicked out of the paper?'—*The Tomahawk*, June 17.

The first three 'anecdotes' were supplied by Mulligan to his paper, with many others which need not here be repeated: he kept them up with amazing energy and variety. Anecdotes of Sir George Thrum met you unexpectedly in queer corners of country papers: puffs of the English school of music appeared perpetually in 'Notices to Correspondents' in the Sunday prints, some of which Mr. Slang commanded, and in others over which the indefatigable Mulligan had a control. This youth was the soul of the little conspiracy for raising Morgiana into fame: and humble as he is, and great and

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respectable as is Sir George Thrum, it is my belief that the Ravenswing would never have been the Ravenswing she is but for the ingenuity and energy of the honest Hibernian reporter.

It is only the business of the great man who writes the leading articles which appear in the large type of the daily papers to compose those astonishing pieces of eloquence; the other parts of the paper are left to the ingenuity of the sub-editor, whose duty it is to select paragraphs, reject or receive horrid accidents, police reports, &c.; with which, occupied as he is in the exercise of his tremendous functions, the editor himself cannot be expected to meddle. The fate of Europe is his province; the rise and fall of empires, and the great questions of State demand the editor's attention: the humble puff, the paragraph about the last murder, or the state of the crops, or the sewers in Chancery Lane, is confided to the care of the sub; and it is curious to see what a prodigious number of Irishmen exist among the sub-editors of London. When the Liberator enumerates the services of his countryman, how the battle of Fontenoy was won by the Irish Brigade, how the battle of Waterloo would have been lost but for the Irish regiments, and enumerates other acts for which we are indebted to Milesian heroism and genius—he ought at least to mention the Irish brigade of the press, and the amazing services they do to this country.

The truth is, the Irish reporters and soldiers appear to do their duty right well; and my friend Mr. Mulligan is one of the former. Having the interests of his opera and the Ravenswing strongly at heart, and being amongst his brethren an exceedingly popular fellow, he managed matters so that never a day passed but some paragraph appeared somewhere regarding the new singer, in whom, for their countryman's sake, all his brothers and sub-editors felt an interest.

These puffs, destined to make known to all the world

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the merits of the Ravenswing, of course had an effect upon a gentleman very closely connected with that lady, the respectable prisoner in the Fleet, Captain Walker. As long as he received his weekly two guineas from Mr. Woolsey, and the occasional half-crowns which his wife could spare in her almost daily visits to him, he had never troubled himself to inquire what her pursuits were, and had allowed her (though the worthy woman longed with all her might to betray herself) to keep her secret. He was far from thinking, indeed, that his wife would prove such a treasure to him.

But when the voice of fame and the columns of the public journals brought him each day some new story regarding the merits, genius, and beauty of the Ravenswing; when rumours reached him that she was the favourite pupil of Sir George Thrum: when she brought him five guineas after singing at the 'Philharmonic' (other five the good soul had spent in purchasing some smart new cockades, hats, cloaks, and laces, for her little son); when, finally, it was said that Slang, the great manager, offered her an engagement at thirty guineas per week, Mr. Walker became exceedingly interested in his wife's proceedings, of which he demanded from her the fullest explanation.

Using his marital authority, he absolutely forbade Mrs. Walker's appearance on the public stage; he wrote to Sir George Thrum a letter expressive of his highest indignation that negotiations so important should ever have been commenced without his authorisation; and he wrote to his dear Slang (for these gentlemen were very intimate, and in the course of his transactions as an agent Mr. W. had had many dealings with Mr. S.) asking his dear Slang whether the latter thought his friend Walker would be so green as to allow his wife to appear on the stage, and he remain in prison with all his debts on his head?

And it was a curious thing now to behold how eager

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those very creditors who but yesterday (and with perfect correctness) had denounced Mr. Walker as a swindler; who had refused to come to any composition with him, and had sworn never to release him; how they on a sudden became quite eager to come to an arrangement with him, and offered, nay, begged and prayed him to go free, —only giving them his own and Mrs. Walker's acknowledgment of their debt, with a promise that a part of the lady's salary should be devoted to the payment of the claim.

'The lady's salary!' said Mr. Walker indignantly, to these gentlemen and their attorneys. 'Do you suppose I will allow Mrs. Walker to go on the stage?—do you suppose I am such a fool as to sign bills to the full amount of these claims against me, when in a few months more I can walk out of prison without paying a shilling? Gentlemen, you take Howard Walker for an idiot. I like the Fleet, and rather than pay I'll stay here for these ten years.'

In other words, it was the Captain's determination to make some advantageous bargain for himself with his creditors and the gentlemen who were interested in bringing forward Mrs. Walker on the stage. And who can say that in so determining he did not act with laudable prudence and justice.

'You do not surely consider, my very dear sir, that half the amount of Mrs. Walker's salaries is too much for my immense trouble and pains in teaching her?' cried Sir George Thrum (who, in reply to Walker's note, thought it was prudent to wait personally on that gentleman). 'Remember that I am the first master in England; that I have the best interest in England; that I can bring her out at the Palace, and at every concert and musical festival in England; that I am obliged to teach her every single note that she utters; and that without me she could no more sing a song than her little baby could walk without its nurse.'

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'I believe about half what you say,' said Mr. Walker.

'My dear Captain Walker! would you question my integrity? Who was it that made Mrs. Millington's fortune,—the celebrated Mrs. Millington, who has now got a hundred thousand pounds? Who was it that brought out the finest tenor in Europe, Poppleton? Ask the musical world, ask those great artists themselves, and they will tell you they owe their reputation, their fortune, to Sir George Thrum.'

'It is very likely,' replied the Captain coolly. 'You *are* a good master, I dare say, Sir George; but I am not going to article Mrs. Walker to you for three years, and sign her articles in the Fleet. Mrs. Walker shan't sing till I'm a free man, that's flat: if I stay here till you're dead she shan't.'

'Gracious powers, sir!' exclaimed Sir George, 'do you expect me to pay your debts?'

'Yes, old boy,' answered the Captain, 'and to give me something handsome in hand, too; and that's my ultimatum: and so I wish you good morning, for I'm engaged to play a match at tennis below.

This little interview exceedingly frightened the worthy knight, who went home to his lady in a delirious state of alarm occasioned by the audacity of Captain Walker.

Mr. Slang's interview with him was scarcely more satisfactory. He owed, he said, four thousand pounds. His creditors might be brought to compound for five shillings in the pound. He would not consent to allow his wife to make a single engagement until the creditors were satisfied, and until he had a handsome sum in hand to begin the world with. 'Unless my wife comes out, you'll be in the *Gazette* yourself, you know you will. So you may take her or leave her, as you think fit.'

'Let her sing one night as a trial,' said Mr. Slang.

'If she sings one night, the creditors will want their money in full,' replied the Captain. 'I shan't let her

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labour, poor thing, for the profit of those scoundrels!' added the prisoner, with much feeling. And Slang left him with a much greater respect for Walker than he had ever before possessed. He was struck with the gallantry of the man who could triumph over misfortunes, nay, make misfortune itself an engine of good luck.

Mrs. Walker was instructed instantly to have a severe sore throat. The journals in Mr. Slang's interest deplored this illness pathetically; while the papers in the interest of the opposition theatre magnified it with great malice. 'The new singer,' said one, 'the great wonder which Slang promised us, is as hoarse as a *raven!*' 'Doctor Thorax pronounces,' wrote another paper, 'that the quinsy, which has suddenly prostrated Mrs. Ravenswing, whose singing at the Philharmonic, previous to her appearance at the "T. R——," excited so much applause, has destroyed the lady's voice for ever. We luckily need no other prima donna, when that place, as nightly thousands acknowledge, is held by Miss Ligonier.' The *Looker-on* said, 'That although some well-informed contemporaries had declared Mrs. W. Ravenswing's complaint to be a quinsy, others, on whose authority they could equally rely, had pronounced it to be a consumption. At all events, she was in an exceedingly dangerous state; from which, though we do not expect, we heartily trust she may recover. Opinions differ as to the merits of this lady, some saying that she was altogether inferior to Miss Ligonier, while other connoisseurs declare the latter lady to be by no means so accomplished a person. This point, we fear,' continued the *Looker-on*, 'can never now be settled; unless, which we fear is improbable, Mrs. Ravenswing should ever so far recover as to be able to make her *début;* and even then, the new singer will not have a fair chance unless her voice and strength shall be fully restored. This information, which we have from exclusive resources, may be relied on,' concluded the *Looker-on*, 'as authentic.'

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It was Mr. Walker himself, that artful and audacious Fleet prisoner, who concocted those very paragraphs against his wife's health which appeared in the journals of the Ligonier party. The partisans of that lady were delighted, the creditors of Mr. Walker astounded, at reading them. Even Sir George Thrum was taken in, and came to the Fleet prison in considerable alarm.

'Mum's the word, my good sir!' said Mr. Walker. 'Now is the time to make arrangements with the creditors.'

Well, these arrangements were finally made. It does not matter how many shillings in the pound satisfied the rapacious creditors of Morgiana's husband. But it is certain that her voice returned to her all of a sudden upon the Captain's release. The papers of the Mulligan faction again trumpeted her perfections; the agreement with Mr. Slang was concluded; that with Sir George Thrum the great composer satisfactorily arranged; and the new opera underlined in immense capitals in the bills, and put in rehearsal with immense expenditure on the part of the scene-painter and costumier.

Need we tell with what triumphant success the 'Brigand's Bride' was received? All the Irish sub-editors the next morning took care to have such an account of it as made Miss Ligonier and Baroski die with envy. All the reporters who could spare time were in the boxes to support their friend's work. All the journeyman tailors of the establishment of Linsey, Woolsey & Co. had pit tickets given to them, and applauded with all their might. All Mr. Walker's friends of the 'Regent Club' lined the side-boxes with white kid gloves; and in a little box by themselves sat Mrs. Crump and Mr. Woolsey, a great deal too much agitated to applaud—so agitated, that Woolsey even forgot to fling down the bouquet he had brought for the Ravenswing.

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But there was no lack of those horticultural ornaments. The theatre servants wheeled away a wheelbarrow-full (which were flung on the stage the next night over again); and Morgiana, blushing, panting, weeping, was led off by Mr. Poppleton, the eminent tenor, who had crowned her with one of the most conspicuous of the chaplets.

Here she flew to her husband and flung her arms round his neck. He was flirting behind the side-scenes with Mademoiselle Flicflac, who had been dancing in the divertissement; and was probably the only man in the theatre of those who witnessed the embrace that did not care for it. Even Slang was affected, and said with perfect sincerity that he wished he had been in Walker's place. The manager's fortune was made, at least for the season. He acknowledged so much to Walker, who took a week's salary for his wife in advance that very night.

There was, as usual, a grand supper in the green-room. The terrible Mr. Bludyer appeared in a new coat of the well-known Woolsey cut, and the little tailor himself and Mrs. Crump were not the least happy of the party. But when the Ravenswing took Woolsey's hand, and said she never would have been there but for him, Mr. Walker looked very grave, and hinted to her that she must not, in her position, encourage the attentions of persons in that rank of life. 'I shall pay,' said he proudly, 'every farthing that is owing to Mr. Woolsey, and shall employ him for the future. But you understand, my love, that one cannot at one's own table receive one's own tailor.

Slang proposed Morgiana's health in a tremendous speech, which elicited cheers, and laughter, and sobs, such as only managers have the art of drawing from the theatrical gentlemen and ladies in their employ. It was observed, especially among the chorus-singers at the bottom of the table, that their emotion was intense.

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They had a meeting the next day and voted a piece of plate to Adolphus Slang, Esquire, for his eminent services in the cause of the drama.

Walker returned thanks for his lady. That was, he said, the proudest moment of his life. He was proud to think that he had educated her for the stage, happy to think that his sufferings had not been in vain, and that his exertions in her behalf were crowned with full success. In her name and his own he thanked the company, and sat down, and was once more particularly attentive to Mademoiselle Flicflac.

Then came an oration from Sir George Thrum, in reply to Slang's toast to *him*. It was very much to the same effect as the speech by Walker, the two gentlemen attributing to themselves individually the merit of bringing out Mrs. Walker. He concluded by stating that he should always hold Mrs. Walker as the daughter of his heart, and to the last moment of his life should love and cherish her. It is certain that Sir George was exceedingly elated that night, and would have been scolded by his lady on his return home, but for the triumph of the evening.

Mulligan's speech of thanks, as the author of the 'Brigand's Bride,' was, it must be confessed, extremely tedious. It seemed there would be no end to it; when he got upon the subject of Ireland especially, which somehow was found to be intimately connected with the interests of music and the theatre. Even the choristers pooh-poohed this speech, coming though it did from the successful author, whose songs of wine, love, and battle, they had been repeating that night.

The 'Brigand's Bride' ran for many nights. Its choruses were tuned on the organs of the day. Morgiana's airs, 'The Rose upon my Balcony' and the 'Lightning on the Cataract' (recitative and scena) were on everybody's lips, and brought so many guineas to Sir George Thrum that he was encouraged to have his

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portrait engraved, which still may be seen in the music-shops. Not many persons, I believe, bought proof impressions of the plate, price two guineas; whereas, on the contrary, all the young clerks in banks, and all the *fast* young men of the universities, had pictures of the Ravenswing in their apartments—as Biondetta (the brigand's bride), as Zelyma (in the 'Nuptials of Benares'), as Barbareska (in the 'Mine of Tobolsk'), and in all her famous characters. In the latter she disguises herself as a Uhlan, in order to save her father, who is in prison; and the Ravenswing looked so fascinating in this costume in pantaloons and yellow boots, that Slang was for having her instantly in Captain Macheath, whence arose their quarrel.

She was replaced at Slang's theatre by Snooks, the rhinoceros-tamer, with his breed of wild buffaloes. Their success was immense. Slang gave a supper, at which all the company burst into tears; and assembling in the green-room next day, they, as usual, voted a piece of plate to Adolphus Slang, Esquire, for his eminent services to the drama.

In the Captain Macheath dispute Mr. Walker would have had his wife yield; but on this point, and for once, she disobeyed her husband and left the theatre. And when Walker cursed her (according to his wont) for her abominable selfishness and disregard of his property, she burst into tears and said she had spent but twenty guineas on herself and baby during the year, that her theatrical dressmaker's bills were yet unpaid, and that she had never asked him how much he spent on that odious French *figurante*.

All this was true, except about the French *figurante*. Walker, as the lord and master, received all Morgiana's earnings, and spent them as a gentleman should. He gave very neat dinners at a cottage in Regent's Park (Mr. and Mrs. Walker lived in Green Street, Grosvenor Square), he played a good deal at the 'Regent;' but as

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to the French *figurante*, it must be confessed, that Mrs. Walker was in a sad error: *that* lady and the Captain had parted long ago; it was Madame Dolores de Tras-os-Montes who inhabited the cottage in St. John's Wood now.

But if some little errors of this kind might be attributable to the Captain, on the other hand, when his wife was in the provinces, he was the most attentive of husbands; made all her bargains, and received every shilling before he would permit her to sing a note. Thus he prevented her from being cheated, as a person of her easy temper doubtless would have been, by designing managers and needy concert-givers. They always travelled with four horses; and Walker was adored in every one of the principal hotels in England. The waiters flew at his bell. The chambermaids were afraid he was a sad naughty man, and thought his wife no such great beauty; the landlords preferred him to any duke. *He* never looked at their bills, not he! In fact, his income was at least four thousand a year for some years of his life.

Master Woolsey Walker was put to Doctor Wapshot's seminary, whence, after many disputes on the Doctor's part as to getting his half-year's accounts paid, and after much complaint of ill-treatment on the little boy's side, he was withdrawn, and placed under the care of the Reverend Mr. Swishtail, at Turnham Green; where all his bills are paid by his godfather, now the head of the firm of Woolsey & Co.

As a gentleman, Mr. Walker still declines to see him; but he has not, as far as I have heard, paid the sums of money which he threatened to refund; and, as he is seldom at home, the worthy tailor can come to Green Street at his leisure. He and Mrs. Crump and Mrs. Walker often take the omnibus to Brentford, and a cake with them to little Woolsey at school; to whom the tailor says he will leave every shilling of his property.

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The Walkers have no other children; but when she takes her airing in the Park she always turns away at the sight of a low phæton, in which sits a woman with rouged cheeks, and a great number of overdressed children and a French *bonne*, whose name, I am given to understand, is Madame Dolores de Tras-os-Montes. Madame de Tras-os-Montes always puts a great gold glass to her eye as the Ravenswing's carriage passes, and looks into it with a sneer. The two coachmen used always to exchange queer winks at each other in the ring, until Madame de Tras-os-Montes lately adopted a tremendous chasseur, with huge whiskers and a green and gold livery; since which time the formerly named gentlemen do not recognise each other.

The Ravenswing's life is one of perpetual triumph on the stage; and, as every one of the fashionable men about town have been in love with her, you may fancy what a pretty character she has. Lady Thrum would die sooner than speak to that unhappy young woman; and, in fact, the Thrums have a new pupil, who is a siren without the dangerous qualities of one, who has the person of Venus, and the mind of a Muse, and who is coming out at one of the theatres immediately. Baroski says, 'De liddle Rafenschwing is just as font of me as effer!' People are very shy about receiving her in society; and when she goes to sing at a concert, Miss Prim starts up and skurries off in a state of the greatest alarm, lest, 'that person' should speak to her.

Walker is voted a good, easy, rattling, gentlemanly fellow, and nobody's enemy but his own. His wife, they say, is dreadfully extravagant: and, indeed, since his marriage, and in spite of his wife's large income, he has been in the Bench several times; but she signs some bills and he comes out again, and is as gay and genial as ever. All mercantile speculations he has wisely long since given up; he likes to throw a main of an evening, as I have said, and to take his couple of bottles at dinner.

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On Friday he attends at the theatre for his wife's salary, and transacts no other business during the week. He grows exceedingly stout, dyes his hair, and has a bloated purple look about the nose and cheeks, very different from that which first charmed the heart of Morgiana.

By the way, Eglantine has been turned out of the Bower of Bloom, and now keeps a shop at Tunbridge Wells. Going down thither last year without a razor, I asked a fat seedy man lolling in a faded nankeen jacket at the door of a tawdry little shop in the Pantiles, to shave me. He said in reply, 'Sir, I do not practise in that branch of the profession!' and turned back into the little shop. It was Archibald Eglantine. But in the wreck of his fortunes he still has his captain's uniform, and his grand cross of the order of the Castle and Falcon of Panama.

POSTSCRIPT

G. Fitz-Boodle, Esq., to O. Yorke, Esq.

Zum Trierischen Hof, Coblenz, *July* 10, 1843.

My dear Yorke,—The story of the Ravenswing was written a long time since, and I never could account for the bad taste of the publishers of the metropolis who refused it an insertion in their various magazines. This fact would never have been alluded to but for the following circumstance:—

Only yesterday, as I was dining at this excellent hotel, I remarked a bald-headed gentleman in a blue coat and brass buttons, who looked like a colonel on half-pay, and by his side a lady and a little boy of twelve, whom the gentleman was cramming with an amazing quantity of cherries and cakes. A stout old dame in a wonderful cap and ribands was seated by the lady's side, and it was easy to see they were English, and I thought I had already made their acquaintance elsewhere.

The younger of the ladies at last made a bow with an accompanying blush.

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'Surely,' said I, 'I have the honour of speaking to Mrs. Ravenswing?'

'Mrs. Woolsey, sir,' said the gentleman; 'my wife has long since left the stage:' and at this the old lady in the wonderful cap trod on my toes very severely, and nodded her head and all her ribands in a most mysterious way. Presently the two ladies rose and left the table, the elder declaring that she heard the baby crying.

'Woolsey, my dear, go with your mamma,' said Mr. Woolsey, patting the boy on the head. The young gentleman obeyed the command, carrying off a plate of macaroons with him.

'Your son is a fine boy, sir,' said I.

'My step-son, sir,' answered Mr. Woolsey; and added, in a louder voice, 'I knew you, Mr. Fitz-Boodle, at once, but did not mention your name for fear of agitating my wife. She don't like to have the memory of old times renewed, sir; her former husband, whom you knew, Captain Walker, made her very unhappy. He died in America, sir, of this, I fear' (pointing to the bottle), 'and Mrs. W. quitted the stage a year before I quitted business. Are you going on to Wiesbaden?'

They went off in their carriage that evening, the boy on the box making great efforts to blow out of the postilion's tasselled horn.

I am glad that poor Morgiana is happy at last, and hastened to inform you of the fact. I am going to visit the old haunts of my youth at Pumpernickel. Adieu.—Yours,

G. F.-B.

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MR. AND MRS. FRANK BERRY

CHAPTER I

THE FIGHT AT SLAUGHTER HOUSE

I AM very fond of reading about battles, and have most of Marlborough's and Wellington's at my fingers' ends; but the most tremendous combat I ever saw, and one that interests me to think of more than Malplaquet or Waterloo (which, by the way, has grown to be a downright nuisance, so much do men talk of it after dinner, prating most disgustingly about 'the Prussians coming up,' and what not)—I say the most tremendous combat ever known was that between Berry and Biggs the gown-boy, which commenced in a certain place called Middle Briars, situated in the midst of the cloisters that run along the side of the playground of Slaughter House School near Smithfield, London. It was there, madam, that your humble servant had the honour of acquiring, after six years' labour, that immense fund of classical knowledge which in after life has been so exceedingly useful to him.

The circumstances of the quarrel were these:—Biggs, the gown-boy (a man who, in those days, I thought was at least seven feet high, and was quite thunderstruck to find in after life that he measured no more than five feet four), was what we called 'second cock' of the school; the first cock was a great, big, good-humoured, lazy, fair-haired fellow, Old Hawkins by name, who, because he

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was large and good-humoured, hurt nobody. Biggs, on the contrary, was a sad bully; he had half-a-dozen fags, and beat them all unmercifully. Moreover, he had a little brother, a boarder in Potky's house, whom, as a matter of course, he hated and maltreated worse than any one else.

Well, one day, because young Biggs had not brought his brother his hoops, or had not caught a ball at cricket, or for some other equally good reason, Biggs the elder so belaboured the poor little fellow, that Berry, who was sauntering by, and saw the dreadful blows which the elder brother was dealing to the younger with his hockey-stick, felt a compassion for the little fellow (perhaps he had a jealousy against Biggs, and wanted to try a few rounds with him, but that I can't vouch for); however, Berry passing by, stopped and said, 'Don't you think you have thrashed the boy enough, Biggs?' He spoke this in a very civil tone, for he never would have thought of interfering rudely with the sacred privilege that an upper boy at a public school always has of beating a junior, especially when they happen to be brothers.

The reply of Biggs, as might be expected, was to hit young Biggs with the hockey-stick twice as hard as before, until the little wretch howled with pain. 'I suppose it's no business of yours, Berry,' said Biggs, thumping away all the while, and laid on worse and worse.

Until Berry (and, indeed, little Biggs) could bear it no longer, and the former, bouncing forward, wrenched the stick out of old Biggs's hands, and sent it whirling out of the cloister window, to the great wonder of a crowd of us small boys, who were looking on. Little boys always like to see a little companion of their own soundly beaten.

'There!' said Berry, looking into Biggs's face, as much as to say, 'I've gone and done it;' and he added to the brother, 'Scud away, you little thief; I've saved you this time.'

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'Stop, young Biggs!' roared out his brother after a pause; 'or I'll break every bone in your infernal scoundrelly skin!'

Young Biggs looked at Berry, then at his brother, then came at his brother's order, as if back to be beaten again; but lost heart, and ran away as fast as his little legs could carry him.

'I'll do for him another time,' says Biggs. 'Here, under-boy, take my coat;' and we all began to gather round and formed a ring.

'We had better wait till after school, Biggs,' cried Berry, quite cool, but looking a little pale. 'There are only five minutes now, and it will take you more than that to thrash me.'

Biggs upon this committed a great error; for he struck Berry slightly across the face with the back of his hand, saying, 'You are in a funk.' But this was a feeling which Frank Berry did not in the least entertain; for, in reply to Biggs's back-hander, and as quick as thought, and with all his might and main—pong! he delivered a blow upon old Biggs's nose that made the claret spirt, and sent the second cock down to the ground as if he had been shot.

He was up again, however, in a minute, his face white and gashed with blood, his eyes glaring, a ghastly spectacle; and Berry, meanwhile, had taken his coat off, and by this time there were gathered in the cloisters, on all the windows, and upon each other's shoulders, one hundred and twenty young gentlemen at the very least, for the news had gone out through the playground of 'a fight between Berry and Biggs.'

But Berry was quite right in his remark about the propriety of deferring the business, for at this minute, Mr. Chip, the second master, came down the cloisters going into school, and grinned in his queer way as he saw the state of Biggs's face. 'Halloa, Mr. Biggs,' said he, 'I suppose you have run against a finger-post.' That

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was the regular joke with us at school, and you may be sure we all laughed heartily: as we always did when Mr. Chip made a joke, or anything like a joke. 'You had better go to the pump, sir, and get yourself washed, and not let Doctor Buckle see you in that condition.' So saying, Mr. Chip disappeared to his duties in the under-school, whither all we little boys followed him.

It was Wednesday, a half-holiday, as everybody knows, and boiled-beef day at Slaughter House. I was in the same boarding-house with Berry, and we all looked to see whether he ate a good dinner, just as one would examine a man who was going to be hanged. I recollected, in after-life, in Germany, seeing a friend who was going to fight a duel eat five larks for his breakfast, and thought I had seldom witnessed greater courage. Berry ate moderately of the boiled beef—*boiled child* we used to call it at school, in our elegant jocular way; he knew a great deal better than to load his stomach upon the eve of such a contest as was going to take place.

Dinner was very soon over, and Mr. Chip, who had been all the while joking Berry, and pressing him to eat, called him up into his study, to the great disappointment of us all, for we thought he was going to prevent the fight; but no such thing. The Reverend Edward Chip took Berry into his study, and poured him out two glasses of port-wine, which he made him take with a biscuit, and patted him on the back, and went off. I have no doubt he was longing, like all of us, to see the battle; but etiquette, you know, forbade.

When we went out into the green, Old Hawkins was there—the great Hawkins, the cock of the school. I have never seen the man since, but still think of him as of something awful, gigantic, mysterious: he who could thrash everybody, who could beat all the masters; how we longed for him to put in his hand and lick Buckle!

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He was a dull boy, not very high in the school, and had all his exercises written for him. Buckle knew this, but respected him; never called him up to read Greek plays; passed over all his blunders, which were many; let him go out of half-holidays into the town as he pleased: how should any man dare to stop him—the great calm magnanimous silent Strength! They say he licked a Life-Guardsman: I wonder whether it was Shaw, who killed all those Frenchmen? No, it could not be Shaw, for he was dead *au champ d'honneur*; but he *would* have licked Shaw if he had been alive. A bargeman I know he licked, at Jack Randall's in Slaughter House Lane. Old Hawkins was too lazy to play at cricket; he sauntered all day in the sunshine about the green, accompanied by little Tippins, who was in the sixth form, laughed and joked at Hawkins eternally, and was the person who wrote all his exercises.

Instead of going into town this afternoon, Hawkins remained at Slaughter House, to see the great fight between the second and third cocks.

The different masters of the school kept boarding-houses (such as Potky's, Chip's, Wickens's, Pinney's, and so on), and the playground, or 'green' as it was called, although the only thing green about the place was the broken glass on the walls that separate Slaughter House from Wilderness Row and Goswell Street—(many a time have I seen Mr. Pickwick look out of his window in that street, though we did not know him then)—the playground, or green, was common to all. But if any stray boy from Potky's was found, for instance, in, or entering into, Chip's house, the most dreadful tortures were practised upon him: as I can answer in my own case.

Fancy, then, our astonishment at seeing a little three-foot wretch, of the name of Wills, one of Hawkins's fags (they were both in Potky's), walk undismayed amongst us lions at Chip's house, as the 'rich and rare' young

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lady did in Ireland. We were going to set upon him and devour or otherwise maltreat him, when he cried out in a little shrill impertinent voice, '*Tell Berry I want him!*'

We all roared with laughter. Berry was in the sixth form, and Wills or any under-boy would as soon have thought of 'wanting' him, as I should of wanting the Duke of Wellington.

Little Wills looked round in an imperious kind of way. 'Well,' says he, stamping his foot, 'do you hear? *Tell Berry that* HAWKINS *wants him!*'

As for resisting the law of Hawkins, you might as soon think of resisting immortal Jove. Berry and Tolmash, who was to be his bottle-holder, made their appearance immediately, and walked out into the green where Hawkins was waiting, and, with an irresistible audacity that only belonged to himself, in the face of nature and all the regulations of the place, was smoking a cigar. When Berry and Tolmash found him, the three began slowly pacing up and down in the sunshine, and we little boys watched them.

Hawkins moved his arms and hands every now and then, and was evidently laying down the law about boxing. We saw his fists darting out every now and then with mysterious swiftness, hitting one, two, quick as thought, as if in the face of an adversary; now his left hand went up, as if guarding his own head, now his immense right fist dreadfully flapped the air, as if punishing his imaginary opponent's miserable ribs. The conversation lasted for some ten minutes, about which time gown-boys' dinner was over, and we saw these youths, in their black horned-button jackets and knee-breeches, issuing from their door in the cloisters. There were no hoops, no cricket-bats, as usual on a half-holiday. Who would have thought of play in expectation of such tremendous sport as was in store for us?

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Towering among the gown-boys, of whom he was the head and the tyrant, leaning upon Bushby's arm, and followed at a little distance by many curious pale awe-stricken boys, dressed in his black silk stockings, which he always sported, and with a crimson bandanna tied round his waist, came BIGGS. His nose was swollen with the blow given before school, but his eyes flashed fire. He was laughing and sneering with Bushby, and evidently intended to make minced meat of Berry.

The betting began pretty freely: the bets were against poor Berry. Five to three were offered—in ginger-beer. I took six to four in raspberry open tarts. The upper boys carried the thing farther still: and I know for a fact, that Swang's book amounted to four pound three (but he hedged a good deal), and Tittery lost seventeen shillings in a single bet to Pitts, who took the odds.

As Biggs and his party arrived, I heard Hawkins say to Berry, 'For heaven's sake, my boy, fib with your right, and *mind his left hand!*'

Middle Briars was voted to be too confined a space for the combat, and it was agreed that it should take place behind the under-school in the shade, whither we all went. Hawkins, with his immense silver hunting-watch, kept the time; and water was brought from the pump close to Notley's the pastrycook's, who did not admire fisticuffs at all on half-holidays, for the fights kept the boys away from his shop. Gutley was the only fellow in the school who remained faithful to him, and he sat on the counter—the great gormandising brute!—eating tarts the whole day.

This famous fight, as every Slaughter House man knows, lasted for two hours and twenty-nine minutes, by Hawkins's immense watch. All this time the air resounded with cries of 'Go it, Berry!' 'Go it, Biggs!' 'Pitch into him!' 'Give it him!' and so on. Shall I describe the hundred and two rounds of the combat?—

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No!—It would occupy too much space, and the taste for such descriptions has passed away.*

1st round. Both the combatants fresh, and in prime order. The weight and inches somewhat on the gown-boy's side. Berry goes gallantly in, and delivers a clinker on the gown-boy's jaw. Biggs makes play with his left. Berry down.

. . . . . .

4th round. Claret drawn in profusion from the gown-boy's grogshop. (He went down, and had his front tooth knocked out, but the blow cut Berry's knuckles a great deal.)

. . . . . .

15th round. Chancery. Fibbing. Biggs makes dreadful work with his left. Break away. Rally. Biggs down. Betting still six to four on the gown-boy.

. . . . . .

20th round. The men both dreadfully punished. Berry somewhat shy of his adversary's left hand.

. . . . . .

29th to 42nd round. The Chipsite all this while breaks away from the gown-boy's left, and goes down on a knee. Six to four on the gown-boy, until the fortieth round, when the bets became equal.

. . . . . .

102nd and last round. For half-an-hour the men had stood up to each other, but were almost too weary to strike. The gown-boy's face hardly to be recognised, swollen and streaming with blood. The Chipsite in a similiar condition, and still more punished about his side from his enemy's left hand. Berry gives a blow at his adversary's face, and falls over him as he falls.

* As it is very probable that many fair readers may not approve of the extremely forcible language in which the combat is depicted, I beg them to skip it and pass on to the next chapter, and to remember that it has been modelled on the style of the very best writers of the sporting papers.

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The gown-boy can't come up to time. And thus ended the great fight of Berry and Biggs.

. . . . . .

And what, pray, has this horrid description of a battle and a parcel of schoolboys to do with *Men's Wives?*

What has it to do with *Men's Wives?*—A great deal more, madam, than you think for. Only read Chapter II., and you shall hear.

CHAPTER II

THE COMBAT AT VERSAILLES

I AFTERWARDS came to be Berry's fag, and, though beaten by him daily, he allowed, of course, no one else to lay a hand upon me, and I got no more thrashing than was good for me. Thus an intimacy grew up between us, and after he left Slaughter House and went into the dragoons, the honest fellow did not forget his old friend, but actually made his appearance one day in the playground in moustaches and a braided coat, and gave me a gold pencil-case and a couple of sovereigns. I blushed when I took them, but take them I did; and I think the thing I almost best recollect in my life, is the sight of Berry getting behind an immense bay cab-horse, which was held by a correct little groom, and was waiting near the school in Slaughter House Square. He proposed, too, to have me to 'Long's,' where he was lodging for the time; but this invitation was refused on my behalf by Doctor Buckle, who said, and possibly with correctness, that I should get little good by spending my holiday with such a scapegrace.

Once afterwards he came to see me at Christ Church, and we made a show of writing to one another, and didn't, and always had a hearty mutual goodwill; and though we did not quite burst into tears on parting, were

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yet quite happy when occasion threw us together, and so almost lost sight of each other. I heard lately that Berry was married, and am rather ashamed to say, that I was not so curious as even to ask the maiden name of his lady.

Last summer I was at Paris, and had gone over to Versailles to meet a party, one of which was a young lady to whom I was tenderly— But, never mind. The day was rainy, and the party did not keep its appointment: and after yawning through the interminable Palace picture-galleries, and then making an attempt to smoke a cigar in the Palace garden—for which crime I was nearly run through the body by a rascally sentinel—I was driven, perforce, into the great bleak lonely *place* before the Palace, with its roads branching off to all the towns in the world, which Louis and Napoleon once intended to conquer, and there enjoyed my favourite pursuit at leisure, and was meditating whether I should go back to 'Véfour's' for dinner, or patronise my friend M. Duboux of the 'Hôtel des Réservoirs,' who gives not only a good dinner, but as dear a one as heart can desire. I was, I say, meditating these things, when a carriage passed by. It was a smart low calash, with a pair of bay horses and a postillion in a drab jacket that twinkled with innumerable buttons, and I was too much occupied in admiring the build of the machine, and the extreme tightness of the fellow's inexpressibles, to look at the personages within the carriage, when the gentleman roared out 'Fitz!' and the postillion pulled up and the lady gave a shrill scream, and a little black-muzzled spaniel began barking and yelling with all his might, and a man with moustaches jumped out of the vehicle, and began shaking me by the hand.

'Drive home, John,' said the gentleman: 'I'll be with you, my love, in an instant—it's an old friend. Fitz, let me present you to Mrs. Berry.'

The lady made an exceedingly gentle inclination of

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her black-velvet bonnet, and said, 'Pray, my love, remember that it is just dinner-time. However, never mind *me*.' And with another slight toss and a nod to the postillion, that individual's white leather breeches began to jump up and down again in the saddle, and the carriage disappeared, leaving me shaking my old friend Berry by the hand.

He had long quitted the army, but still wore his military beard, which gave to his fair pink face a fierce and lion-like look. He was extraordinarily glad to see me, as only men are glad who live in a small town, or in dull company. There is no destroyer of friendships like London, where a man has no time to think of his neighbour, and has far too many friends to care for them. He told me in a breath of his marriage, and how happy he was, and straight insisted that I must come home to dinner, and see more of Angelica, who had invited me herself—didn't I hear her?

'Mrs. Berry asked *you*, Frank; but I certainly did not hear her ask *me!*'

'She would not have mentioned the dinner but that she meant me to ask you. I know she did,' cried Frank Berry. 'And, besides—hang it—I'm master of the house. So come you shall. No ceremony, old boy—one or two friends—snug family party—and we'll talk of old times over a bottle of claret.'

There did not seem to me to be the slightest objection to this arrangement, except that my boots were muddy, and my coat of the morning sort. But as it was quite impossible to go to Paris and back again in a quarter of an hour, and as a man may dine with perfect comfort to himself in a frock-coat, it did not occur to me to be particularly squeamish, or to decline an old friend's invitation upon a pretext so trivial.

Accordingly we walked to a small house in the Avenue de Paris, and were admitted first into a small garden ornamented by a grotto, a fountain, and several nymphs

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in plaster-of-Paris, then up a mouldy old steep stair into a hall, where a statue of Cupid and another of Venus welcomed us with their eternal simper; then through a *salle-à-manger*, where covers were laid for six; and finally to a little saloon, where Fido the dog began to howl furiously according to his wont.

It was one of the old pavilions that had been built for a pleasure house in the gay days of Versailles, ornamented with abundance of damp Cupids and cracked gilt cornices, and old mirrors let into the walls, and gilded once, but now painted a dingy French white. The long low windows looked into the court, where the fountain played its ceaseless dribble, surrounded by numerous rank creepers and weedy flowers, but in the midst of which the statues stood with their bases quite moist and green.

I hate fountains and statues in dark confined places: that cheerless, endless plashing of water is the most inhospitable sound ever heard. The stiff grin of those French statues, or ogling Canova Graces, is by no means more happy, I think, than the smile of a skeleton, and not so natural. Those little pavilions in which the old *roués* sported were never meant to be seen by daylight, depend on't. They were lighted up with a hundred wax-candles, and the little fountain yonder was meant only to cool their claret. And so, my first impression of Berry's place of abode was rather a dismal one. However, I heard him in the *salle-à-manger* drawing the corks, which went off with a *cloop*, and that consoled me.

As for the furniture of the rooms appertaining to the Berrys, there was a harp in a leather case, and a piano and a flute-box, and a huge tambour with a Saracen's nose just begun, and likewise on the table a multiplicity of those little gilt books, half sentimental and half religious, which the wants of the age and of our young ladies have produced in such numbers of late. I quarrel

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with no lady's taste in that way; but heigho! I had rather that Mrs. Fitz-Boodle should read 'Humphry Clinker!'

Besides these works there was a 'Peerage,' of course. What genteel family was ever without one?

I was making for the door to see Frank drawing the corks, and was bounced at by the amiable little black-muzzled spaniel, who fastened his teeth in my pantaloons, and received a polite kick in consequence, which sent him howling to the other end of the room, and the animal was just in the act of performing that feat of agility, when the door opened and madame made her appearance. Frank came behind her, peering over her shoulder with rather an anxious look.

Mrs. Berry is an exceedingly white and lean person. She has thick eyebrows, which meet rather dangerously over her nose, which is Grecian, and a small mouth with no lips—a sort of feeble pucker in the face as it were. Under her eyebrows are a pair of enormous eyes, which she is in the habit of turning constantly ceiling-wards. Her hair is rather scarce, and worn in bandeaux, and she commonly mounts a sprig of laurel, or a dark flower or two, which, with the sham *tour*—I believe that is the name of the knob of artificial hair that many ladies sport—gives her a rigid and classical look. She is dressed in black, and has invariably the neatest of silk stockings and shoes: for forsooth her foot is a fine one, and she always sits with it before her, looking at it, stamping it, and admiring it a great deal. 'Fido,' she says to her spaniel, 'you have almost crushed my poor foot;' or, 'Frank,' to her husband, 'bring me a footstool:' or, 'I suffer so from cold in the feet,' and so forth; but be the conversation what it will, she is always sure to put *her foot* into it.

She invariably wears on her neck the miniature of her late father, Sir George Catacomb, apothecary to George III.; and she thinks those two men the greatest the world ever saw. She was born in Baker Street, Port-

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man Square, and that is saying almost enough of her. She is as long, as genteel, and as dreary, as that deadly-lively place, and sports, by way of ornament, her papa's hatchment, as it were, as every tenth Baker Street house has taught her.

What induced such a jolly fellow as Frank Berry to marry Miss Angelica Catacomb no one can tell. He met her, he says, at a ball at Hampton Court, where his regiment was quartered, and where, to this day, lives 'her aunt Lady Pash.' She alludes perpetually in conversation to that celebrated lady; and if you look in the 'Baronetage' to the pedigree of the Pash family, you may see manuscript notes by Mrs. Frank Berry, relative to them and herself. Thus, when you see in print that Sir John Pash married Angelica, daughter of Graves Catacomb, Esquire, in a neat hand you find written, *and sister of the late Sir George Catacomb, of Baker Street, Portman Square:* 'A.B.' follows of course. It is a wonder how fond ladies are of writing in books, and signing their charming initials! Mrs. Berry's before-mentioned little gilt books are scored with pencil-marks, or occasionally at the margin with a !—note of interjection, or the words '*Too true, A.B.*' and so on. Much may be learned with regard to lovely woman by a look at the books she reads in; and I had gained no inconsiderable knowledge of Mrs. Berry by the ten minutes spent in the drawing-room, while she was at her toilet in the adjoining bed-chamber.

'You have often heard me talk of George Fitz,' says Berry, with an appealing look to madame.

'Very often,' answered his lady, in a tone which clearly meant 'a great deal too much.' 'Pray, sir,' continued she, looking at my boots with all her might, 'are we to have your company at dinner?'

'Of course you are, my dear; what else do you think he came for? You would not have the man go back to Paris to get his evening coat, would you?'

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'At least, my love, I hope you will go and put on *yours*, and change those muddy boots. Lady Pash will be here in five minutes, and you know Dobus is as punctual as clockwork.' Then turning to me with a sort of apology that was as consoling as a box on the ear, 'We have some friends at dinner, sir, who are rather particular persons; but I am sure when they hear that you only came on a sudden invitation, they will excuse your morning dress.—Bah! what a smell of smoke!'

With this speech madame placed herself majestically on a sofa, put out her foot, called Fido, and relapsed into an icy silence. Frank had long since evacuated the premises, with a rueful look at his wife, but never daring to cast a glance at me. I saw the whole business at once: here was this lion of a fellow tamed down by a she Van Amburgh, and fetching and carrying at her orders a great deal more obediently than her little yowling black-muzzled darling of a Fido.

I am not, however, to be tamed so easily, and was determined in this instance not to be in the least disconcerted, or to show the smallest sign of ill-humour: so to *renouer* the conversation, I began about Lady Pash.

'I heard you mention the name of Pash, I think?' said I. 'I know a lady of that name, and a very ugly one it is too.'

'It is most probably not the same person,' answered Mrs. Berry, with a look which intimated that a fellow like me could never have had the honour to know so exalted a person.

'I mean old Lady Pash of Hampton Court. Fat woman—fair, ain't she?—and wears an amethyst in her forehead, has one eye, a blonde wig, and dresses in light green?'

'Lady Pash, sir, is MY AUNT,' answered Mrs. Berry (not altogether displeased, although she expected money

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from the old lady; but you know we love to hear our friends abused when it can be safely done).

'Oh, indeed! she was a daughter of old Catacomb's of Windsor, I remember, the undertaker. They called her husband Callipash, and her ladyship Pishpash. So you see, madam, that I know the whole family!'

'Mr. Fitz-Simons!' exclaimed Mrs. Berry, rising, 'I am not accustomed to hear nicknames applied to myself and my family; and must beg you, when you honour us with your company, to spare our feelings as much as possible. Mr. Catacomb had the confidence of his SOVEREIGN, sir, and Sir John Pash was of Charles II.'s creation. The one was my uncle, sir; the other my grandfather!'

'My dear madam, I am extremely sorry, and most sincerely apologise for my inadvertence. But you owe me an apology too: my name is not Fitz-Simons, but Fitz-Boodle.'

'What! of Boodle Hall—my husband's old friend; of Charles I.'s creation? My dear sir, I beg you a thousand pardons, and am delighted to welcome a person of whom I have heard Frank say so much. Frank!' (to Berry, who soon entered in very glossy boots and a white waistcoat), 'do you know, darling, I mistook Mr. Fitz-Boodle for Mr. Fitz-Simons—that horrid Irish horse-dealing person; and I never, never, never can pardon myself for being so rude to him.'

The big eyes here assumed an expression that was intended to kill me outright with kindness: from being calm, still, reserved, Angelica suddenly became gay, smiling, confidential, and *folâtre*. She told me she had heard I was a sad creature, and that she intended to reform me, and that I must come and see Frank a great deal.

Now, although Mr. Fitz-Simons, for whom I was mistaken, is as low a fellow as ever came out of Dublin, and having been a captain in somebody's army, is now a

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blackleg and horse-dealer by profession; yet, if I had brought him home to Mrs. Fitz-Boodle to dinner, I should have liked far better that that imaginary lady should have received him with decent civility, and not insulted the stranger within her husband's gates. And, although it was delightful to be received so cordially when the mistake was discovered, yet I found that *all* Berry's old acquaintances were by no means so warmly welcomed; for another old school-chum presently made his appearance, who was treated in a very different manner.

This was no other than poor Jack Butts, who is a sort of small artist and picture-dealer by profession, and was a day-boy at Slaughter House when we were there, and very serviceable in bringing in sausages, pots of pickles, and other articles of merchandise, which we could not otherwise procure. The poor fellow has been employed, seemingly, in the same office of fetcher and carrier ever since; and occupied that post for Mrs. Berry. It was 'Mr. Butts, have you finished that drawing for Lady Pash's album?' and Butts produced it; and, 'Did you match the silk for me at Delille's?' and there was the silk, bought, no doubt, with the poor fellow's last five francs; and, 'Did you go to the furniture-man in the Rue St. Jacques; and bring the canary-seed, and call about my shawl at that odious dawdling Madame Fichet's; and have you brought the guitar-strings?'

Butts hadn't brought the guitar-strings; and thereupon Mrs. Berry's countenance assumed the same terrible expression which I had formerly remarked in it, and which made me tremble for Berry.

'My dear Angelica,' though said he with some spirit, 'Jack Butts isn't a baggage-waggon, nor a Jack-of-all-trades; you make him paint pictures for your women's albums, and look after your upholsterer, and your canary-bird, and your milliners, and turn rusty because he forgets your last message.'

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'I did not turn *rusty*, Frank, as you call it elegantly. I'm very much obliged to Mr. Butts for performing my commissions—very much obliged. And as for not paying for the pictures to which you so kindly allude, Frank, I should never have thought of offering payment for so paltry a service; but I'm sure I shall be happy to pay if Mr. Butts will send me in his bill.'

'By Jove, Angelica, this is too much!' bounced out Berry; but the little matrimonial squabble was abruptly ended, by Berry's French man flinging open the door and announcing MILADI PASH and Doctor Dobus, which two personages made their appearance.

The person of old Pash has been already parenthetically described. But quite different from her dismal niece in temperament, she is as jolly an old widow as ever wore weeds. She was attached somehow to the Court, and has a multiplicity of stories about the princesses and the old King, to which Mrs. Berry never fails to call your attention in her grave, important way. Lady Pash has ridden many a time to the Windsor hounds; she made her husband become a member of the Four-in-hand Club, and has numberless stories about Sir Godfrey Webster, Sir John Lade, and the old heroes of those times. She has lent a rouleau to Dick Sheridan, and remembers Lord Byron when he was a sulky slim young lad. She says Charles Fox was the pleasantest fellow she ever met with, and has not the slightest objection to inform you that one of the princes was very much in love with her. Yet somehow she is only fifty-two years old, and I have never been able to understand her calculation. One day or other before her eye went out, and before those pearly teeth of hers were stuck to her gums by gold, she must have been a pretty-looking body enough. Yet, in spite of the latter inconvenience, she eats and drinks too much every day, and tosses off a glass of maraschino with a trembling pudgy hand, every finger of which twinkles with a dozen, at least, of old

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rings. She has a story about every one of those rings, and a stupid one too. But there is always something pleasant, I think, in stupid family stories: they are good-hearted people who tell them.

As for Mrs. Muchit, nothing need be said of her; she is Pash's companion: she has lived with Lady Pash since the peace. Nor does my Lady take any more notice of her than of the dust of the earth. She calls her 'poor Muchit,' and considers her a half-witted creature. Mrs. Berry hates her cordially, and thinks she is a designing toad-eater, who has formed a conspiracy to rob her of her aunt's fortune. She never spoke a word to poor Muchit during the whole of dinner, or offered to help her to anything on the table.

In respect to Dobus, he is an old Peninsular man, as you are made to know before you have been very long in his company; and, like most army surgeons, is a great deal more military in his looks and conversation, than the combatant part of the forces. He has adopted the sham-Duke-of-Wellington air, which is by no means uncommon in veterans; and, though one of the easiest and softest fellows in existence, speaks slowly and briefly, and raps out an oath or two occasionally, as it is said a certain great captain does. Besides the above, we sat down to table with Captain Goff, late of the —— Highlanders; the Reverend Lemuel Whey, who preaches at St. Germains; little Cutler, and the Frenchman, who always *will* be at English parties on the Continent, and who, after making some frightful efforts to speak English, subsides and is heard no more. Young married ladies and heads of families generally have him for the purpose of waltzing, and in return he informs his friends of the club or the *café* that he has made the conquest of a *charmante Anglaise*. Listen to me, all family men who read this! and never *let an unmarried Frenchman into your doors*. This lecture alone is worth the price of the book. It is not that they do any

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harm in one case out of a thousand, Heaven forbid! but they mean harm. They look on our Susannas with unholy dishonest eyes. Hearken to two of the grinning rogues chattering together as they clink over the asphalte of the Boulevard with lacquered boots, and plastered hair, and waxed moustaches, and turned-down shirt-collars, and stays and goggling eyes, and hear how they talk of a good simple giddy vain dull Baker Street creature, and canvass her points, and show her letters, and insinuate—never mind, but I tell you my soul grows angry when I think of the same; and I can't hear of an Englishwoman marrying a Frenchman without feeling a sort of shame and pity for her.*

To return to the guests. The Reverend Lemuel Whey is a tea-party man, with a curl on his forehead and a scented pocket-handkerchief. He ties his white neckcloth to a wonder, and I believe sleeps in it. He brings his flute with him; and prefers Handel, of course; but has one or two pet profane songs of the sentimental kind, and will occasionally lift up his little pipe in a glee. He does not dance, but the honest fellow would give the world to do it; and he leaves his clogs in the passage, though it is a wonder he wears them, for in the muddiest weather he never has a speck on his foot. He was at St. John's College, Cambridge, and was rather gay for a term or two, he says. He is, in a word, full of the milk-and-water of human kindness, and his family lives near Hackney.

As for Goff, he has a huge shining bald forehead, and immense bristling Indian-red whiskers. He wears white wash-leather gloves, drinks fairly, likes a rubber, and has

* Every person who has lived abroad can, of course, point out a score of honourable exceptions to the case above hinted at, and knows many such unions in which it is the Frenchman who honours the English lady by marrying her. But it must be remembered that marrying in France means commonly *fortune-hunting*: and as for the respect in which marriage is held in France, let all the French novels in M. Rolandi's library be perused by those who wish to come to a decision upon the question.

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a story for after dinner, beginning, 'Doctor, ye racklackt Sandy M'Lellan, who joined us in the West Indies. Wal, sir,' &c. These and little Cutler made up the party.

Now it may not have struck all readers, but any sharp fellow conversant with writing must have found out long ago, that if there had been something exceedingly interesting to narrate with regard to this dinner at Frank Berry's, I should have come out with it a couple of pages since, nor have kept the public looking for so long a time at the dish-covers and ornaments of the table.

But the simple fact must now be told, that there was nothing of the slightest importance occurred at this repast, except that it gave me an opportunity of studying Mrs. Berry in many different ways; and, in spite of the extreme complaisance which she now showed me, of forming, I am sorry to say, a most unfavourable opinion of that fair lady. Truth to tell, I would much rather she should have been civil to Mrs. Muchit, than outrageously complimentary to your humble servant; and as she professed not to know what on earth there was for dinner, would it not have been much more natural for her not to frown, and bob, and wink, and point, and pinch her lips as often as Monsieur Anatole, her French domestic, not knowing the ways of English dinner-tables, placed anything out of its due order? The allusions to Boodle Hall were innumerable, and I don't know any greater bore than to be obliged to talk of a place which belongs to one's elder brother. Many questions were likewise asked about the dowager and her Scotch relatives, the Plumduffs, about whom Lady Pash knew a great deal, having seen them at Court and at Lord Melville's. Of course she had seen them at Court and at Lord Melville's, as she might have seen thousands of Scotchmen besides; but what mattered it to me, who care not a jot for old Lady Fitz-Boodle?

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'When you write, you'll say you met an old friend of her Ladyship's,' says Mrs. Berry, and I faithfully promised I would when I wrote; but if the New Post Office paid us for writing letters (as very possibly it will soon), I could not be bribed to send a line to old Lady Fitz.

In a word, I found that Berry, like many simple fellows before him, had made choice of an imperious, ill-humoured, and under-bred female for a wife, and could see with half an eye that he was a great deal too much her slave.

The struggle was not over yet, however. Witness that little encounter before dinner; and once or twice the honest fellow replied rather smartly during the repast, taking especial care to atone as much as possible for his wife's inattention to Jack and Mrs. Muchit, by particular attention to those personages, whom he helped to everything round about and pressed perpetually to champagne; he drank but little himself, for his amiable wife's eye was constantly fixed on him.

Just at the conclusion of the dessert, madame, who had *boudéd* Berry during dinner-time, became particularly gracious to her lord and master, and tenderly asked me if I did not think the French custom was a good one, of men leaving table with the ladies.

'Upon my word, ma'am,' says I, 'I think it's a most abominable practice.'

'And so do I,' says Cutler.

'A most abominable practice! Do you hear *that?*' cries Berry, laughing, and filling his glass.

'I'm sure, Frank, when we are alone you always come to the drawing-room,' replies the lady sharply.

'Oh, yes! when we're alone, darling,' says Berry, blushing; 'but now we're *not* alone—ha, ha! Anatole, du Bordeaux!'

'I'm sure they sat after the ladies at Carlton House; didn't they, Lady Pash?' says Dobus, who likes his glass.

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'*That* they did!' says my Lady, giving him a jolly nod.

'I racklackt,' exclaims Captain Goff, 'when I was in the Mauritius, that Mestress MacWhirter, who commanded the Saxty-Sackond, used to say, "Mac, if ye want to get lively, ye'll not stop for more than two hours after the leddies have laft ye: if ye want to get drunk, ye'll just dine at the mass." So ye see, Mestress Barry, what was Mac's allowance—haw, haw! Mester Whey, I'll trouble ye for the o-lives.'

But although we were in a clear majority, that indomitable woman, Mrs. Berry, determined to make us all as uneasy as possible, and would take the votes all round. Poor Jack, of course, sided with her, and Whey said he loved a cup of tea and a little music better than all the wine of Bordeaux. As for the Frenchman, when Mrs. Berry said, 'And what do you think, M. le Vicomte?'

'Vat you speak?' said M. de Blagueval, breaking silence for the first time during two hours. Yase—eh? to me you speak?'

'Apry deeny, aimy-voo ally avec les dam?'

'Comment avec les dames?'

'Ally avec les dam com a Parry, ou resty avec les Messew com on Onglyterre?'

'Ah, madame! vous me le démandez?' cries the little wretch, starting up in a theatrical way, and putting out his hand, which Mrs. Berry took, and with this the ladies left the room. Old Lady Pash trotted after her niece with her hand in Whey's, very much wondering at such practices, which were not in the least in vogue in the reign of George III.

Mrs. Berry cast a glance of triumph at her husband, at the defection; and Berry was evidently annoyed that three-eighths of his male forces had left him.

But fancy our delight and astonishment, when in a minute they all three came back again; the Frenchman

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looking entirely astonished, and the parson and the painter both very queer. The fact is, old downright Lady Pash, who had never been in Paris in her life before, and had no notion of being deprived of her usual hour's respite and nap, said at once to Mrs. Berry, 'My dear Angelica, you're surely not going to keep these three men here? Send them back to the dining-room, for I've a thousand things to say to you.' And Angelica, who expects to inherit her aunt's property, of course did as she was bid; on which the old lady fell into an easy chair, and fell asleep immediately,—so soon, that is, as the shout caused by the re-appearance of the three gentlemen in the dining-room had subsided.

I had meanwhile had some private conversation with little Cutler regarding the character of Mrs. Berry. 'She's a regular screw,' whispered he; 'a regular Tartar. Berry shows fight, though, sometimes, and I've known him have his own way for a week together. After dinner he is his own master, and hers when he has had his share of wine; and that's why she will never allow him to drink any.'

Was it a wicked, or was it a noble and honourable thought which came to us both at the same minute, to rescue Berry from his captivity? The ladies, of course, will give their verdict according to their gentle natures; but I know what men of courage will think, and by their jovial judgment will abide.

We received, then, the three lost sheep back into our innocent fold again with the most joyous shouting and cheering. We made Berry (who was, in truth, nothing loth) order up I don't know how much more claret. We obliged the Frenchman to drink *malgré lui*, and in the course of a short time we had poor Whey in such a state of excitement, that he actually volunteered to sing a song, which he said he had heard at some very gay supper-party at Cambridge, and which begins:—

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'A pye sat on a pear-tree,
A pye sat on a pear-tree,
A pye sat on a pear-tree,
Heigh-ho, heigh-ho, heigh-ho!'

Fancy Mrs. Berry's face as she looked in, in the midst of that Bacchanalian ditty, when she saw no less a person than the Reverend Lemuel Whey carolling it!

'It is you, my dear?' cries Berry, as brave now as any Petruchio. 'Come in and sit down, and hear Whey's song.'

'Lady Pash is asleep, Frank,' said she.

'Well, darling! that's the very reason. Give Mrs. Berry a glass, Jack, will you?'

'Would you wake your aunt, sir?' hissed out madame.

'*Never mind me, love! I'm awake and like it!*' cried the venerable Lady Pash from the *salon*. 'Sing away, gentlemen!'

At which we all set up an audacious cheer; and Mrs. Berry flounced back to the drawing-room, but did not leave the door open, that her aunt might hear our melodies.

Berry had by this time arrived at that confidential state to which a third bottle always brings the well-regulated mind; and he made a clean confession to Cutler and myself of his numerous matrimonial annoyances. He was not allowed to dine out, he said, and but seldom to ask his friends to meet him at home. He never dared smoke a cigar for the life of him, not even in the stables. He spent the mornings dawdling in eternal shops, the evenings at endless tea-parties, or in reading poems or missionary tracts to his wife. He was compelled to take physic whenever she thought he looked a little pale, to change his shoes and stockings whenever he came in from a walk. 'Look here,' said he, opening his chest, and shaking his fist at Dobus;

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'look what Angelica and that infernal Dobus have brought me to.'

I thought it might be a flannel waistcoat into which madame had forced him: but it was worse: I give you my word of honour it was a *pitch-plaster!*

We all roared at this, and the doctor as loud as any one; but he vowed that he had no hand in the pitch-plaster. It was a favourite family remedy of the late apothecary Sir George Catacomb, and had been put on by Mrs. Berry's own fair hands.

When Anatole came in with coffee, Berry was in such high courage, that he told him to go to the deuce with it; and we never caught sight of Lady Pash more, except when, muffled up to the nose, she passed through the *salle-à-manger* to go to her carriage, in which Dobus and the parson were likewise to be transported to Paris. 'Be a man, Frank,' says she, 'and hold your own'—for the good old lady had taken her nephew's part in the matrimonial business—'and you, Mr. Fitz-Boodle, come and see him often. You're a good fellow, take old one-eyed Callipash's word for it. Shall I take you to Paris?'

Dear kind Angelica, she had told her aunt all I said!

'Don't go, George,' says Berry, squeezing me by the hand. So I said I was going to sleep at Versailles that night; but if she would give a convoy to Jack Butts, it would be conferring a great obligation on him: with which favour the old lady accordingly complied, saying to him, with great coolness, 'Get up and sit with John in the rumble, Mr. What-d'ye-call-'im.' The fact is, the good old soul despises an artist as much as she does a tailor.

Jack tripped to his place very meekly; and 'Remember Saturday,' cried the Doctor; and 'Don't forget Thursday,' exclaimed the divine,—'a bachelor's party, you know.' And so the cavalcade drove thundering down the gloomy old Avenue de Paris.

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The Frenchman, I forgot to say, had gone away exceedingly ill long before; and the reminiscences of 'Thursday' and 'Saturday' evoked by Dobus and Whey, were, to tell the truth, parts of our conspiracy; for in the heat of Berry's courage, we had made him promise to dine with us all round *en garçon*; with all except Captain Goff, who 'racklacted' that he was engaged every day for the next three weeks; as indeed he is, to a thirty-sous ordinary which the gallant officer frequents, when not invited elsewhere.

Cutler and I then were the last on the field; and though we were for moving away, Berry, whose vigour had, if possible, been excited by the bustle and colloquy in the night air, insisted upon dragging us back again, and actually proposed a grill for supper!

We found in the *salle-à-manger* a strong smell of an extinguished lamp, and Mrs. Berry was snuffing out the candles on the sideboard.

'Hullo, my dear!' shouts Berry: 'easy if you please: we've not done yet!'

'Not done yet, Mr. Berry!' groans the lady, in a hollow sepulchral tone.

'No, Mrs. B., not done yet. We are going to have some supper, ain't we, George?'

'I think it's quite time to go home,' said Mr. Fitz-Boodle (who, to say the truth, began to tremble himself).

'I think it is, sir; you are quite right, sir; you will pardon me, gentlemen, I have a bad headache, and will retire.'

'Good-night, my dear!' said that audacious Berry. 'Anatole, tell the cook to broil a fowl and bring some wine.'

If the loving couple had been alone, or if Cutler had not been an *attaché* to the embassy, before whom she was afraid of making herself ridiculous, I am confident that Mrs. Berry would have fainted away on the spot; and

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that all Berry's courage would have tumbled down lifeless by the side of her. So she only gave a martyrised look, and left the room; and while we partook of the very unnecessary repast, was good enough to sing some hymn-tunes to an exceedingly slow movement in the next room, intimating that she was awake, and that, though suffering, she found her consolations in religion.

These melodies did not in the least add to our friend's courage. The devilled fowl had, somehow, no devil in it. The champagne in the glasses looked exceedingly flat and blue. The fact is, that Cutler and I were now both in a state of dire consternation, and soon made a move for our hats, and lighting each a cigar in the hall, made across the little green where the Cupids and nymphs were listening to the dribbling fountain in the dark.

'I'm hanged if I don't have a cigar too!' says Berry, rushing after us: and accordingly putting in his pocket a key about the size of a shovel, which hung by the little handle of the outer grille, forth he sallied, and joined us in our fumigation.

He stayed with us a couple of hours, and returned homewards in perfect good spirits, having given me his word of honour he would dine with us the next day. He put his immense key into the grille, and unlocked it; but the gate would not open: *it was bolted within.*

He began to make a furious jangling and ringing at the bell; and in oaths, both French and English, called upon the recalcitrant Anatole.

After much tolling of the bell, a light came cutting across the crevices of the inner door; it was thrown open, and a figure appeared with a lamp,—a tall slim figure of a woman, clothed in white from head to foot.

It was Mrs. Berry, and when Cutler and I saw her, we both ran away as fast as our legs could carry us.

Berry, at this, shrieked with a wild laughter. 'Remember to-morrow, old boys,' shouted he,—'six o'clock;' and we were a quarter of a mile off when the

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gate closed, and the little mansion of the Avenue de Paris was once more quiet and dark.

The next afternoon, as we were playing at billiards, Cutler saw Mrs. Berry drive by in her carriage; and as soon as rather a long rubber was over, I thought I would go and look for our poor friend, and so went down to the Pavilion. Every door was open, as the wont is in France, and I walked in unannounced, and saw this:

He was playing a duet with her on the flute. She had been out but for half-an-hour, after not speaking all the morning; and having seen Cutler at the billiard-room window, and suspecting we might take advantage of her absence, she had suddenly returned home again, and had flung herself, weeping, into her Frank's arms, and said she could not bear to leave him in anger. And so, after sitting for a little while sobbing on his knee, she had forgotten and forgiven everything!

The dear angel! I met poor Frank in Bond Street only yesterday; but he crossed over to the other side of the way. He had on goloshes, and is grown very fat and pale. He has shaved off his moustaches, and, instead, wears a respirator. He has taken his name off all his clubs, and lives very grimly in Baker Street. Well, ladies, no doubt you say he is right: and what are the odds, so long as *you* are happy?

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DENNIS HAGGARTY'S WIFE

THERE was an odious Irishwoman who with her daughter used to frequent the 'Royal Hotel' at Leamington some years ago, and who went by the name of Mrs. Major Gam. Gam had been a distinguished officer in his Majesty's service, whom nothing but death and his own amiable wife could overcome. The widow mourned her husband in the most becoming bombazeen she could muster, and had at least half-an-inch of lamp-black round the immense visiting tickets which she left at the houses of the nobility and gentry her friends.

Some of us, I am sorry to say, used to call her Mrs. Major Gammon; for if the worthy widow had a propensity, it was to talk largely of herself and family (of her own family, for she held her husband's very cheap), and of the wonders of her paternal mansion, Molloyville, county of Mayo. She was of the Molloys of that county; and though I never heard of the family before, I have little doubt, from what Mrs. Major Gam stated, that they were the most ancient and illustrious family of that part of Ireland. I remember there came down to see his aunt a young fellow with huge red whiskers and tight nankeens, a green coat, and an awful breastpin, who, after two days' stay at the Spa, proposed marriage to Miss S——, or, in default, a duel with her father; and who drove a flash curricle with a bay and a grey, and who was presented with much pride by Mrs. Gam as Castlereagh Molloy of Molloyville. We all agreed that

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he was the most insufferable snob of the whole season, and were delighted when a bailiff came down in search of him.

Well, this is all I know personally of the Molloyville family; but at the house if you met the widow Gam, and talked on any subject in life, you were sure to hear of it. If you asked her to have peas at dinner, she would say, 'Oh, sir, after the peas at Molloyville, I really don't care for any others,—do I, dearest Jemima? We always had a dish in the month of June, when my father gave his head gardener a guinea (we had three at Molloyville), and sent him with his compliments and a quart of peas to our neighbour, dear Lord Marrowfat. What a sweet place Marrowfat Park is! isn't it, Jemima?' If a carriage passed by the window, Mrs. Major Gammon would be sure to tell you that there were three carriages at Molloyville, 'the barouche, the chawiot, and the covered cyar.' In the same manner she would favour you with the number and names of the footmen of the establishment; and on a visit to Warwick Castle (for this bustling woman made one in every party of pleasure that was formed from the hotel), she gave us to understand that the great walk by the river was altogether inferior to the principal avenue of Molloyville Park. I should not have been able to tell so much about Mrs. Gam and her daughter, but that, between ourselves, I was particularly sweet upon a young lady at the time, whose papa lived at the 'Royal,' and was under the care of Doctor Jephson.

The Jemima appealed to by Mrs. Gam in the above sentence was, of course, her daughter, apostrophised by her mother, 'Jemima, my soul's darling!' or, 'Jemima, my blessed child!' or, 'Jemima, my own love!' The sacrifices that Mrs. Gam had made for that daughter were, she said, astonishing. The money she had spent in masters upon her, the illnesses through which she had nursed her, the ineffable love the mother bore her, were

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only known to Heaven, Mrs. Gam said. They used to come into the room with their arms round each other's waists: at dinner between the courses the mother would sit with one hand locked in her daughter's; and if only two or three young men were present at the time, would be pretty sure to kiss her Jemima more than once during the time whilst the bohea was poured out.

As for Miss Gam, if she was not handsome, candour forbids me to say she was ugly. She was neither one nor t'other. She was a person who wore ringlets and a band round her forehead; she knew four songs, which became rather tedious at the end of a couple of months' acquaintance; she had excessively bare shoulders; she inclined to wear numbers of cheap ornaments, rings, brooches, *ferronnières*, smelling-bottles, and was always, we thought, very smartly dressed: though old Mrs. Lynx hinted that her gowns and her mother's were turned over and over again, and that her eyes were almost put out by darning stockings.

These eyes Miss Gam had very large, though rather red and weak, and used to roll them about at every eligible unmarried man in the place. But though the widow subscribed to all the balls, though she hired a fly to go to the meet of the hounds, though she was constant at church, and Jemima sang louder than any person there except the clerk, and though, probably, any person who made her a happy husband would be invited down to enjoy the three footmen, gardeners, and carriages at Molloyville, yet no English gentleman was found sufficiently audacious to propose. Old Lynx used to say that the pair had been at Tunbridge, Harrogate, Brighton, Ramsgate, Cheltenham, for this eight years past; where they had met, it seemed, with no better fortune. Indeed, the widow looked rather high for her blessed child: and as she looked with the contempt which no small number of Irish people feel upon all persons who get their bread by labour or commerce;

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and as she was a person whose energetic manners, costume, and brogue were not much to the taste of quiet English country gentlemen, Jemima—sweet, spotless flower—still remained on her hands, a thought withered, perhaps, and seedy.

Now, at this time, the 120th Regiment was quartered at Weedon Barracks, and with the corps was a certain Assistant-Surgeon Haggarty, a large, lean, tough, raw-boned man, with big hands, knock-knees, and carroty whiskers, and, withal, as honest a creature as ever handled a lancet. Haggarty, as his name imports, was of the very same nation as Mrs. Gam, and, what is more, the honest fellow had some of the peculiarities which belonged to the widow, and bragged about his family almost as much as she did. I do not know of what particular part of Ireland they were kings; but monarchs they must have been, as have been the ancestors of so many thousand Hibernian families; but they had been men of no small consideration in Dublin, 'where my father,' Haggarty said, 'is as well known as King William's statue, and where he "rowls his carriage, too," let me tell ye.'

Hence Haggarty was called by the wags "Rowl the carriage," and several of them made inquiries of Mrs. Gam regarding him: 'Mrs. Gam, when you used to go up from Molloyville to the Lord Lieutenant's balls, and had your town house in Fitzwilliam Square, used you to meet the famous Doctor Haggarty in society?'

'Is it Surgeon Haggarty of Gloucester Street ye mean? The black Papist! D'ye suppose that the Molloys would sit down to table with a creature of that sort?'

'Why, isn't he the most famous physician in Dublin, and doesn't he rowl his carriage there?'

'The horrid wretch! He keeps a shop, I tell ye, and sends his sons out with the medicine. He's got four of them off into the army, Ulick and Phil, and Terence and

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Denny, and now it's Charles that takes out the physic. But how should I know about these odious creatures? Their mother was a Burke, of Burke's Town, county Cavan, and brought Surgeon Haggarty two thousand pounds. She was a Protestant; and I am surprised how she could have taken up with a horrid odious Popish apothecary!'

From the extent of the widow's information, I am led to suppose that the inhabitants of Dublin are not less anxious about their neighbours than are the natives of English cities; and I think it is very probable that Mrs. Gam's account of the young Haggartys who carried out the medicine is perfectly correct, for a lad in the 120th made a caricature of Haggarty coming out of a chemist's shop with an oilcloth basket under his arm, which set the worthy surgeon in such a fury that there would have been a duel between him and the ensign, could the fiery doctor have had his way.

Now, Dionysius Haggarty was of an exceedingly inflammable temperament, and it chanced that of all the invalids, the visitors, the young squires of Warwickshire, the young manufacturers from Birmingham, the young officers from the barracks—it chanced, unluckily for Miss Gam and himself, that he was the only individual who was in the least smitten by her personal charms. He was very tender and modest about his love, however, for it must be owned that he respected Mrs. Gam hugely, and fully admitted, like a good simple fellow as he was, the superiority of that lady's birth and breeding to his own. How could he hope that he, a humble assistant-surgeon, with a thousand pounds his Aunt Kitty left him for all his fortune — how could he hope that one of the race of Molloyville would ever condescend to marry him?

Inflamed, however, by love, and inspired by wine, one day at a picnic at Kenilworth, Haggarty, whose love and raptures were the talk of the whole regiment, was

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induced by his waggish comrades to make a proposal in form.

'Are you aware, Mr. Haggarty, that you are speaking to a Molloy?' was all the reply majestic Mrs. Gam made when, according to the usual formula the fluttering Jemima referred her suitor to 'mamma.' She left him with a look which was meant to crush the poor fellow to earth; she gathered up her cloak and bonnet, and precipitately called for her fly. She took care to tell every single soul in Leamington that the son of the odious Papist apothecary had had the audacity to propose for her daughter (indeed a proposal, coming from whatever quarter it may, does no harm), and left Haggarty in a state of extreme depression and despair.

His down-heartedness, indeed, surprised most of his acquaintances in and out of the regiment, for the young lady was no beauty, and a doubtful fortune, and Dennis was a man outwardly of an unromantic turn, who seemed to have a great deal more liking for beefsteak and whisky-punch than for women, however fascinating.

But there is no doubt this shy uncouth rough fellow had a warmer and more faithful heart hid within him than many a dandy who is as handsome as Apollo. I, for my part, never can understand why a man falls in love, and heartily give him credit for so doing, never mind with what or whom. *That* I take to be a point quite as much beyond an individual's own control as the catching of the small-pox or the colour of his hair. To the surprise of all, Assistant-Surgeon Dionysius Haggarty was deeply and seriously in love; and I am told that one day he very nearly killed the before-mentioned young ensign with a carving-knife, for venturing to make a second caricature, representing Lady Gammon and Jemima in a fantastical park, surrounded by three gardeners, three carriages, three footmen, and the covered cyar. He would have no joking concerning them. He became moody and quarrelsome of habit. He

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was for some time much more in the surgery and hospital than in the mess. He gave up the eating, for the most part, of those vast quantities of beef and pudding for which his stomach used to afford such ample and swift accommodation; and when the cloth was drawn, instead of taking twelve tumblers, and singing Irish melodies, as he used to do, in a horrible cracked yelling voice, he would retire to his own apartment, or gloomily pace the barrack-yard, or madly whip and spur a grey mare he had on the road to Leamington, where his Jemima (although invisible for him) still dwelt.

The season at Leamington coming to a conclusion by the withdrawal of the young fellows who frequented that watering-place, the widow Gam retired to her usual quarters for the other months of the year. Where these quarters were, I think we have no right to ask, for I believe she had quarrelled with her brother at Molloyville, and besides, was a great deal too proud to be a burden on anybody.

Not only did the widow quit Leamington, but very soon afterwards the 120th received its marching orders, and left Weedon and Warwickshire. Haggarty's appetite was by this time partially restored, but his love was not altered, and his humour was still morose and gloomy. I am informed that at this period of his life he wrote some poems relative to his unhappy passion; a wild set of verses of several lengths, and in his handwriting, being discovered upon a sheet of paper in which a pitch-plaster was wrapped up, which Lieutenant and Adjutant Wheezer was compelled to put on for a cold.

Fancy then, three years afterwards, the surprise of all Haggarty's acquaintances on reading in the public papers the following announcement:—

'Married, at Monkstown, on the 12th instant, Dionysius Haggarty, Esq., of H.M. 120th Foot, to Jemima Amelia Wilhelmina Molloy, daughter of the late Major Lancelot

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Gam, R.M., and granddaughter of the late, and niece of the present Burke Bodkin Blake Molloy, Esq., Molloyville, county Mayo.'

'Has the course of true love at last begun to run smooth?' thought I, as I laid down the paper; and the old times, and the old leering bragging widow, and the high shoulders of her daughter, and the jolly days with the 120th, and Doctor Jephson's one-horse chaise, and the Warwickshire hunt, and—and Louisa S——, but never mind *her*,—came back to my mind. Has that good-natured simple fellow at last met with his reward? Well, if he has not to marry the mother-in-law too, he may get on well enough.

Another year announced the retirement of Assistant-Surgeon Haggarty from the 120th, where he was replaced by Assistant-Surgeon Angus Rothsay Leech, a Scotchman, probably; with whom I have not the least acquaintance, and who has nothing whatever to do with this little history.

Still more years passed on, during which time I will not say that I kept a constant watch upon the fortunes of Mr. Haggarty and his lady; for, perhaps, if the truth were known, I never thought for a moment about them; until one day, being at Kingstown, near Dublin, dawdling on the beach, and staring at the Hill of Howth, as most people at that watering-place do, I saw coming towards me a tall gaunt man, with a pair of bushy red whiskers, of which I thought I had seen the like in former years, and a face which could be no other than Haggarty's. It was Haggarty, ten years older than when we last met, and greatly more grim and thin. He had on one shoulder a young gentleman in a dirty tartan costume, and a face exceedingly like his own peeping from under a battered plume of black feathers, while with his other hand he was dragging a light green go-

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cart, in which reposed a female infant of some two years old. Both were roaring with great power of lungs.

As soon as Dennis saw me, his face lost the dull puzzled expression which had seemed to characterise it; he dropped the pole of the go-cart from one hand, and his son from the other, and came jumping forward to greet me with all his might, leaving his progeny roaring in the road.

'Bless my sowl,' says he, 'sure it's Fitz-Boodle! Fitz, don't you remember me? Dennis Haggarty of the 120th? Leamington, you know? Molloy, my boy, hould your tongue, and stop your screeching, and Jemima's too; d'ye hear! Well, it does good to sore eyes to see an old face. How fat you're grown, Fitz; and were ye ever in Ireland before? and a'n't ye delighted with it? Confess, now, isn't it beautiful?'

This question regarding the merits of their country, which I have remarked is put by most Irish persons, being answered in a satisfactory manner, and the shouts of the infants appeased from an apple-stall hard by, Dennis and I talked of old times; I congratulated him on his marriage with the lovely girl whom we all admired, and hoped he had a fortune with her, and so forth. His appearance, however, did not bespeak a great fortune: he had an old grey hat, short old trousers, an old waistcoat with regimental buttons, and patched Blucher boots, such as are not usually sported by persons in easy life.

'Ah!' says he, with a sigh, in reply to my queries, 'times are changed since them days, Fitz-Boodle. My wife's not what she was—the beautiful creature you knew her. Molloy, my boy, run off in a hurry to your mamma, and tell her an English gentleman is coming home to dine; for you'll dine with me, Fitz, in course?' And I agreed to partake of that meal; though Master Molloy altogether declined to obey his papa's orders with respect to announcing the stranger.

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'Well, I must announce you myself,' said Haggarty, with a smile. 'Come, it's just dinner-time, and my little cottage is not a hundred yards off.' Accordingly, we all marched in procession to Dennis's little cottage, which was one of a row and a half of one-storeyed houses, with little courtyards before them, and mostly with very fine names on the door-posts of each. 'Surgeon Haggarty' was emblazoned on Dennis's gate, on a stained green copper-plate; and, not content with this, on the door-post above the bell was an oval with the inscription of 'New Molloyville.' The bell was broken, of course; the court, or garden-path, was mouldy, weedy, seedy; there were some dirty rocks, by way of ornament, round a faded grass-plat in the centre, some clothes and rags hanging out of most part of the windows of New Molloyville, the immediate entrance to which was by a battered scraper, under a broken trellis-work, up which a withered creeper declined any longer to climb.

'Small but snug,' says Haggarty: 'I'll lead the way, Fitz; put your hat on the flower-pot there, and turn to the left into the drawing-room.' A fog of onions and turf-smoke filled the whole of the house, and gave signs that dinner was not far off. Far off? You could hear it frizzling in the kitchen, where the maid was also endeavouring to hush the crying of a third refractory child. But as we entered, all three of Haggarty's darlings were in full roar.

'Is it you, Dennis?' cried a sharp raw voice, from a dark corner in the drawing-room to which we were introduced, and in which a dirty tablecloth was laid for dinner, some bottles of porter and a cold mutton-bone being laid out on a rickety grand piano hard by. 'Ye're always late, Mr. Haggarty. Have you brought the whisky from Nowlan's? I'll go bail ye've not, now.'

'My dear, I've brought an old friend of yours and mine to take pot-luck with us to-day,' said Dennis.

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'When is he to come?' said the lady. At which speech I was rather surprised, for I stood before her.

'Here he is, Jemima, my love,' answered Dennis, looking at me. 'Mr. Fitz-Boodle: don't you remember him in Warwickshire, darling?'

'Mr. Fitz-Boodle! I am very glad to see him,' said the lady, rising and curtseying with much cordiality.

Mrs. Haggarty was blind.

Mrs. Haggarty was not only blind, but it was evident that small-pox had been the cause of her loss of vision. Her eyes were bound with a bandage, her features were entirely swollen, scarred and distorted by the horrible effects of the malady. She had been knitting in a corner when we entered, and was wrapped in a very dirty bedgown. Her voice to me was quite different to that in which she addressed her husband. She spoke to Haggarty in broad Irish: she addressed me in that most odious of all languages—Irish-English, endeavouring to the utmost to disguise her brogue, and to speak with the true dawdling *distingué* English air.

'Are you long in I-a-land?' said the poor creature in this accent. 'You must faind it a sad ba'ba'ous place, Mr. Fitz-Boodle, I'm shu-ah! It was vary kaind of you to come upon us *en famille*, and accept a dinner *sans cérémonie*. Mr. Haggarty, I hope you'll put the waine into aice, Mr. Fitz-Boodle must be melted with this hot weathah.'

For some time she conducted the conversation in this polite strain, and I was obliged to say, in reply to a query of hers, that I did not find her the least altered, though I should never have recognised her but for this rencontre. She told Haggarty with a significant air to get the wine from the cellah, and whispered to me that he was his own butlah; and the poor fellow, taking the hint, scudded away into the town for a pound of beefsteak and a couple of bottles of wine from the tavern.

'Will the childhren get their potatoes and butther

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here?' said a barefoot girl, with long black hair flowing over her face, which she thrust in at the door.

'Let them sup in the nursery, Elizabeth, and send—ah! Edwards to me.'

'Is it cook you mane, ma'am?' said the girl.

'Send her at once!' shrieked the unfortunate woman; and the noise of frying presently ceasing, a hot woman made her appearance, wiping her brows with her apron, and asking, with an accent decidedly Hibernian, what the misthress wanted.

'Lead me up to my dressing-room, Edwards: I really am not fit to be seen in this dishabille by Mr. Fitz-Boodle.'

'Fait' I can't!' says Edwards; 'sure the masther's out at the butcher's, and can't look to the kitchen fire!'

'Nonsense, I must go!' cried Mrs. Haggarty; and so Edwards, putting on a resigned air, and giving her arm and face a further rub with her apron, held out her arm to Mrs. Dennis, and the pair went upstairs.

She left me to indulge my reflections for half-an-hour, at the end of which period she came downstairs dressed in an old yellow satin, with the poor shoulders exposed just as much as ever. She had mounted a tawdry cap, which Haggarty himself must have selected for her. She had all sorts of necklaces, bracelets, and earrings in gold, in garnets, in mother-of-pearl, in ormolu. She brought in a furious savour of musk, which drove the odours of onions and turf-smoke before it; and she waved across her wretched angular mean scarred features an old cambric handkerchief with a yellow lace-border.

'And so you would have known me anywhere, Mr. Fitz-Boodle?' said she, with a grin that was meant to be most fascinating. 'I was sure you would; for though my dreadful illness deprived me of my sight, it is a mercy that it did not change my features or complexion at all!'

This mortification had been spared the unhappy

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woman; but I don't know whether, with all her vanity, her infernal pride, folly, and selfishness, it was charitable to leave her in her error.

Yet why correct her? There is a quality in certain people which is above all advice, exposure, or correction. Only let a man or woman have DULNESS sufficient, and they need bow to no extant authority. A dullard recognises no betters; a dullard can't see that he is in the wrong; a dullard has no scruples of conscience, no doubts of pleasing, or succeeding, or doing right; no qualms for other people's feelings, no respect but for the fool himself. How can you make a fool perceive he is a fool? Such a personage can no more see his own folly than he can see his own ears. And the great quality of Dulness is to be unalterably contented with itself. What myriads of souls are there of this admirable sort,—selfish, stingy, ignorant, passionate, brutal; bad sons, mothers, fathers, never known to do kind actions?

To pause, however, in this disquisition, which was carrying us far off Kingstown, New Molloyville, Ireland —nay, into the wide world wherever dulness inhabits—let it be stated that Mrs. Haggarty, from my brief acquaintance with her and her mother, was of the order of persons just mentioned. There was an air of conscious merit about her, very hard to swallow along with the infamous dinner poor Dennis managed, after much delay, to get on the table. She did not fail to invite me to Molloyville, where she said her cousin would be charmed to see me; and she told me almost as many anecdotes about that place as her mother used to impart in former days. I observed, moreover, that Dennis cut her the favourite pieces of the beef-steak, that she ate thereof with great gusto, and that she drank with similar eagerness of the various strong liquors at table. 'We Irish ladies are all fond of a leetle glass of punch,' she said, with a playful air, and Dennis mixed her a powerful tumbler of such violent grog as I myself could swallow

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only with some difficulty. She talked of her suffering a great deal, of her sacrifices, of the luxuries to which she had been accustomed before marriage,—in a word, of a hundred of those themes, on which some ladies are in the custom of enlarging when they wish to plague some husbands.

But honest Dennis, far from being angry at this perpetual, wearisome, impudent recurrence to her own superiority, rather encouraged the conversation than otherwise. It pleased him to hear his wife discourse about her merits and family splendours. He was so thoroughly beaten down and henpecked, that he, as it were, gloried in his servitude, and fancied that his wife's magnificence reflected credit on himself. He looked towards me, who was half sick of the woman and her egotism, as if expecting me to exhibit the deepest sympathy, and flung me glances across the table as much as to say, 'What a gifted creature my Jemima is, and what a fine fellow I am to be in possession of her.' When the children came down she scolded them of course, and dismissed them abruptly (for which circumstance, perhaps, the writer of these pages was not in his heart very sorry), and, after having sat a preposterously long time, left us, asking whether we would have coffee there or in her boudoir.

'Oh! here, of course,' said Dennis, with rather a troubled air, and in about ten minutes the lovely creature was led back to us again by 'Edwards,' and the coffee made its appearance. After coffee her husband begged her to let Mr. Fitz-Boodle hear her voice: 'He longs for some of his old favourites.'

'No! *do* you?' said she; and was led in triumph to the jingling old piano, and with a screechy wiry voice, sang those very abominable old ditties which I had heard her sing at Leamington ten years back.

Haggarty, as she sang, flung himself back in the chair delighted. Husbands always are, and with the same

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song, one that they have heard when they were nineteen years old, probably; most Englishmen's tunes have that date, and it is rather affecting, I think, to hear an old gentleman of sixty or seventy quavering the old ditty that was fresh when *he* was fresh and in his prime. If he has a musical wife, depend on it he thinks her old songs of 1788 are better than any he has heard since: in fact he has heard *none* since. When the old couple are in high good-humour the old gentleman will take the old lady round the waist, and say, 'My dear, do sing me one of your own songs,' and she sits down and sings with her old voice, and, as she sings, the roses of her youth bloom again for a moment. Ranelagh resuscitates, and she is dancing a minuet in powder and a train.

This is another digression. It was occasioned by looking at poor Dennis's face while his wife was screeching (and, believe me, the former was the more pleasant occupation). Bottom tickled by the fairies could not have been in greater ecstacies. He thought the music was divine; and had further reason for exulting in it, which was, that his wife was always in a good humour after singing, and never would sing but in that happy frame of mind. Dennis had hinted so much in our little colloquy during the ten minutes of his lady's absence in the 'boudoir;' so, at the conclusion of each piece, we shouted 'Bravo!' and clapped our hands like mad.

Such was my insight into the life of Surgeon Dionysius Haggarty and his wife; and I must have come upon him at a favourable moment too, for poor Dennis has spoken, subsequently, of our delightful evening at Kingstown, and evidently thinks to this day that his friend was fascinated by the entertainment there. His inward economy was as follows: he had his half-pay, a thousand pounds, about a hundred a year that his father left, and his wife had sixty pounds a year from the mother; which the mother, of course, never paid. He

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had no practice, for he was absorbed in attention to his Jemima and the children, whom he used to wash, to dress, to carry out, to walk, or to ride, as we have seen, and who could not have a servant, as their dear blind mother could never be left alone. Mrs. Haggarty, a great invalid, used to lie in bed till one, and have breakfast and hot luncheon there. A fifth part of his income was spent in having her wheeled about in a chair, by which it was his duty to walk daily for an allotted number of hours. Dinner would ensue, and the amateur clergy, who abound in Ireland, and of whom Mrs. Haggarty was a great admirer, lauded her everywhere as a model of resignation and virtue, and praised beyond measure the admirable piety with which she bore her sufferings.

Well, every man to his taste. It did not certainly appear to me that *she* was the martyr of the family.

'The circumstances of my marriage with Jemima,' Dennis said to me, in some after conversations we had on this interesting subject, 'were the most romantic and touching you can conceive. You saw what an impression the dear girl had made upon me when we were at Weedon; for from the first day I set eyes on her, and heard her sing her delightful song of "Dark-eyed Maiden of Araby," I felt, and said to Turniquet of ours, that very night, that *she* was the dark-eyed maid of Araby for *me*—not that she was, you know, for she was born in Shropshire. But I felt that I had seen the woman who was to make me happy or miserable for life. You know how I proposed for her at Kenilworth, and how I was rejected, and how I almost shot myself in consequence—no, you don't know that, for I said nothing about it to any one, but I can tell you it was a very near thing; and a very lucky thing for me I didn't do it: for,—would you believe it?—the dear girl was in love with me all the time.'

'Was she really?' said I, who recollected that Miss Gam's love of those days showed itself in a very singular

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manner; but the fact is, when women are most in love they most disguise it.

'Over head and ears in love with poor Dennis,' resumed that worthy fellow, 'who'd ever have thought it? But I have it from the best authority, from her own mother, with whom I'm not over and above good friends now; but of this fact she assured me, and I'll tell you when and how.

'We were quartered at Cork three years after we were at Weedon, and it was our last year at home: and a great mercy that my dear girl spoke in time, or where should we have been *now?* Well, one day, marching home from parade, I saw a lady seated at an open window, by another who seemed an invalid, and the lady at the window, who was dressed in the profoundest mourning, cried out, with a scream, "Gracious heavens! it's Mr. Haggarty of the 120th."

'"Sure I know that voice," says I to Whiskerton.

'"It's a great mercy you don't know it a deal too well," says he: "it's Lady Gammon. She's on some husband-hunting scheme, depend on it, for that daughter of hers. She was at Bath last year on the same errand, and at Cheltenham the year before, where, Heaven bless you! she's as well-known as the 'Hen and Chickens.'"

'"I'll thank you not to speak disrespectfully of Miss Jemima Gam," said I to Whiskerton; "she's of one of the first families in Ireland, and whoever says a word against a woman I once proposed for, insults me,—do you understand?"

'"Well, marry her, if you like," says Whiskerton, quite peevish: "marry her and be hanged!"

'Marry her! the very idea of it set my brain a-whirling, and made me a thousand times more mad than I am by nature.

'You may be sure I walked up the hill to the parade-ground that afternoon, and with a beating heart too. I came to the widow's house. It was called "New

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Molloyville," as this is. Wherever she takes a house for six months she calls it "New Molloyville;" and has had one in Mallow, in Bandon, in Sligo, in Castlebar, in Fermoy, in Drogheda, and the deuce knows where besides: but the blinds were down, and though I thought I saw somebody behind 'em, no notice was taken of poor Denny Haggarty, and I paced up and down all mess-time in hopes of catching a glimpse of Jemima, but in vain. The next day I was on the ground again; I was just as much in love as ever, that's the fact. I'd never been in that way before, look you: and when once caught, I knew it was for life.

'There's no use in telling you how long I beat about the bush, but when I *did* get admittance to the house (it was through the means of young Castlereagh Molloy, whom you may remember at Leamington, and who was at Cork for the regatta, and used to dine at our mess, and had taken a mighty fancy to me)—when I *did* get into the house, I say, I rushed *in medias res* at once; I couldn't keep myself quiet, my heart was too full.

'Oh, Fitz! I shall never forget the day,—the moment I was inthrojuiced into the dthrawing-room' (as he began to be agitated, Dennis's brogue broke out with greater richness than ever; but though a stranger may catch, and repeat from memory, a few words, it is next to impossible for him to *keep up a conversation* in Irish, so that we had best give up all attempts to imitate Dennis). 'When I saw old mother Gam,' said he, 'my feelings overcame me all at once. I rowled down on the ground, sir, as if I'd been hit by a musket-ball. "Dearest madam," says I, "I'll die if you don't give me Jemima."

'"Heavens, Mr. Haggarty!" says she, "how you seize me with surprise! Castlereagh, my dear nephew, had you not better leave us?" and away he went, lighting a cigar, and leaving me still on the floor.

'"Rise, Mr. Haggarty," continued the widow. "I

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will not attempt to deny that this constancy towards my daughter is extremely affecting, however sudden your present appeal may be. I will not attempt to deny that, perhaps, Jemima may have a similar feeling; but, as I said, I never could give my daughter to a Catholic."

'"I'm as good a Protestant as yourself, ma'am," says I; "my mother was an heiress, and we were all brought up her way."

'"That makes the matter very different," says she, turning up the whites of her eyes. "How could I ever have reconciled it to my conscience to see my blessed child married to a Papist? How could I ever have taken him to Molloyville? Well, this obstacle being removed, *I* must put myself no longer in the way between two young people. *I* must sacrifice myself; as I always have when my darling girl was in question. You shall see her, the poor dear lovely gentle sufferer, and learn your fate from her own lips."

'"The sufferer, ma'am," says I; "has Miss Gam been ill?"

'"What! haven't you heard?" cried the widow. "Haven't you heard of the dreadful illness which so nearly carried her from me? For nine weeks, Mr. Haggarty, I watched her day and night, without taking a wink of sleep,—for nine weeks she lay trembling between death and life; and I paid the doctor eighty-three guineas. She is restored now; but she is the wreck of the beautiful creature she was. Suffering, and, perhaps, *another disappointment*—but we won't mention that *now*—have so pulled her down. But I will leave you, and prepare my sweet girl for this strange, this entirely unexpected visit."

'I won't tell you what took place between me and Jemima, to whom I was introduced as she sat in the darkened room, poor sufferer! nor describe to you with what a thrill of joy I seized (after groping about for it) her poor emaciated hand. She did not withdraw it; I

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came out of that room an engaged man, sir; and *now* I was enabled to show her that I had always loved her sincerely, for there was my will, made three years back, in her favour: that night she refused me, as I told ye. I would have shot myself, but they'd have brought me in *non compos*; and my brother Mick would have contested the will, and so I determined to live, in order that she might benefit by my dying. I had but a thousand pounds then: since that my father has left me two more. I willed every shilling to her, as you may fancy, and settled it upon her when we married, as we did soon after. It was not for some time that I was allowed to see the poor girl's face, or, indeed, was aware of the horrid loss she had sustained. Fancy my agony, my dear fellow, when I saw that beautiful wreck!'

There was something not a little affecting to think, in the conduct of this brave fellow, that he never once, as he told his story, seemed to allude to the possibility of his declining to marry a woman who was not the same as the woman he loved; but that he was quite as faithful to her now, as he had been when captivated by the poor tawdry charms of the silly Miss of Leamington. It was hard that such a noble heart as this should be flung away upon yonder foul mass of greedy vanity. Was it hard, or not, that he should remain deceived in his obstinate humility, and continue to admire the selfish silly being whom he had chosen to worship?

'I should have been appointed surgeon of the regiment,' continued Dennis, 'soon after, when it was ordered abroad to Jamaica, where it now is. But my wife would not hear of going, and said she would break her heart if she left her mother. So I retired on half-pay, and took this cottage; and in case any practice should fall in my way—why, there is my name on the brass plate, and I'm ready for anything that comes. But the only case that ever *did* come was one day when I was driving my wife in the chaise; and another, one night,

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of a beggar with a broken head. My wife makes me a present of a baby every year, and we've no debts; and between you and me and the post, as long as my mother-in law is out of the house, I'm as happy as I need be.'

'What! you and the old lady don't get on well?' said I.

'I can't say we do; it's not in nature, you know,' said Dennis, with a faint grin. 'She comes into the house, and turns it topsy-turvy. When she's here, I'm obliged to sleep in the scullery. She's never paid her daughter's income since the first year, though she brags about her sacrifices as if she had ruined herself for Jemima; and besides, when she's here, there's a whole clan of the Molloys, horse, foot, and dragoons, that are quartered upon us, and eat me out of house and home."

'And is Molloyville such a fine place as the widow described it?' asked I, laughing, and not a little curious.

'Oh, a mighty fine place entirely!' said Dennis. 'There's the oak park of two hundred acres, the finest land ye ever saw, only they've cut all the wood down. The garden in the old Molloy's time, they say, was the finest ever seen in the west of Ireland; but they've taken all the glass to mend the house windows; and small blame to them either. There's a clear rent-roll of thirty-five hundred a year, only it's in the hand of receivers; besides other debts, for which there is no land security.

'Your cousin-in law, Castlereagh Molloy, won't come into a large fortune?'

'Oh, he'll do very well,' said Dennis. 'As long as he can get credit, he's not the fellow to stint himself. Faith, I was fool enough to put my name to a bit of paper for him, and as they could not catch him in Mayo, they laid hold of me at Kingstown here. And there was a pretty to do. Didn't Mrs. Gam say I was ruining

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her family, that's all? I paid it by instalments (for all my money is settled on Jemima); and Castlereagh, who's an honourable fellow, offered me any satisfaction in life. Anyhow, he couldn't do more than *that*.'

'Of course not: and now you're friends?'

'Yes, and he and his aunt have had a tiff, too; and he abuses her properly, I warrant ye. He says that she carried about Jemima from place to place, and flung her at the head of every unmarried man in England a'most —my poor Jemima, and she all the while dying in love with me! As soon as she got over the small-pox—she took it at Fermoy—God bless her, I wish I'd been by to be her nurse-tender—as soon as she was rid of it, the old lady said to Castlereagh, "Castlereagh, go to the bar'cks, and find out in the Army List where the 120th is." Off she came to Cork hot foot. It appears that while she was ill, Jemima's love for me showed itself in such a violent way that her mother was overcome, and promised that should the dear child recover, she would try and bring us together. Castlereagh says she would have gone after us to Jamaica.'

'I have no doubt she would,' said I.

'Could you have a stronger proof of love than that?' cried Dennis. 'My dear girl's illness and frightful blindness have, of course, injured her health and her temper. She cannot in her position look to the children, you know, and so they come under my charge for the most part; and her temper is unequal, certainly. But you see what a sensitive, refined, elegant creature she is, and may fancy that she's often put out by a rough fellow like me.'

Here Dennis left me, saying it was time to go and walk out the children; and I think his story has matter of some wholesome reflection in it for bachelors who are about to change their condition, or may console some who are mourning their celibacy. Marry, gentlemen, if you like; leave your comfortable dinner at the club for

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cold-mutton and curl-papers at your home; give up your books or pleasures, and take to yourselves wives and children; but think well on what you do first, as I have no doubt you will after this advice and example. Advice is always useful in matters of love; men always take it; they always follow other people's opinions, not their own; they always profit by example. When they see a pretty woman, and feel the delicious madness of love coming over them, they always stop to calculate her temper, her money, their own money, or suitableness for the married life. . . . Ha, ha, ha! Let us fool in this way no more. I have been in love forty-three times, with all ranks and conditions of women, and would have married every time if they would have let me. How many wives had King Solomon, the wisest of men? And is not that story a warning to us that Love is master of the wisest? It is only fools who defy him.

I must come, however, to the last, and perhaps the saddest, part of poor Denny Haggarty's history. I met him once more, and in such a condition as made me determine to write this history.

In the month of June last I happened to be at Richmond, a delightful little place of retreat; and there, sunning himself upon the terrace, was my old friend of the 120th: he looked older, thinner, poorer, and more wretched than I had ever seen him. 'What! you have given up Kingstown?' said I, shaking him by the hand.

'Yes,' says he.

'And is my lady and your family here at Richmond?'

'No,' says he, with a sad shake of the head; and the poor fellow's hollow eyes filled with tears.

'Good heavens, Denny! what's the matter?' said I. He was squeezing my hand like a vice as I spoke.

'They've LEFT me!' he burst out with a dreadful shout of passionate grief—a horrible scream which seemed to be wrenched out of his heart. 'Left me!' said he, sinking down on a seat, and clenching his great fists, and

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shaking his lean arms wildly. 'I'm a wise man now, Mr. Fitz-Boodle. Jemima has gone away from me, and yet you know how I loved her, and how happy we were! I've got nobody now; but I'll die soon, that's one comfort: and to think it's she that'll kill me after all!'

The story, which he told with a wild and furious lamentation such as is not known among men of our cooler country, and such as I don't like now to recall, was a very simple one. The mother-in-law had taken possession of the house, and had driven him from it. His property at his marriage was settled on his wife. She had never loved him, and told him this secret at last, and drove him out of doors with her selfish scorn and ill-temper. The boy had died; the girls were better, he said, brought up among the Molloys than they could be with him; and so he was quite alone in the world, and was living, or rather dying, on forty pounds a year.

His troubles are very likely over by this time. The two fools who caused his misery will never read this history of him; *they* never read godless stories *in* magazines: and I wish, honest reader, that you and I went to church as much as they do. These people are not wicked *because* of their religious observances, but *in spite* of them. They are too dull to understand humility, too blind to see a tender and simple heart under a rough ungainly bosom. They are sure that all their conduct towards my poor friend here has been perfectly righteous, and that they have given proofs of the most Christian virtue. Haggarty's wife is considered by her friends as a martyr to a savage husband, and her mother is the angel that has come to rescue her. All they did was to cheat him and desert him. And safe in that wonderful self-complacency with which the fools of this earth are endowed, they have not a single pang of conscience for their villainy towards him, and consider their heartlessness as a proof and consequence of their spotless piety and virtue.

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THE
BEDFORD-ROW CONSPIRACY

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The BEDFORD-ROW CONSPIRACY



CHAPTER I*

OF THE LOVES OF MR. PERKINS AND MISS GORGON, AND OF THE TWO GREAT FACTIONS IN THE TOWN OF OLDBOROUGH

'My dear John,' cried Lucy, with a very wise look indeed, 'it must and shall be so. As for Doughty Street, with our means, a house is out of the question.

* A story of Charles de Bernard furnished the plot of 'The Bedford-Row Conspiracy.'

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We must keep three servants, and Aunt Biggs says the taxes are one-and-twenty pounds a year.'

'I have seen a sweet place at Chelsea,' remarked John: 'Paradise Row, No. 17 — garden — greenhouse—fifty pounds a year—omnibus to town within a mile.'

'What! that I may be left alone all day, and you spend a fortune in driving backward and forward in those horrid breakneck cabs: My darling, I should die there—die of fright, I know I should. Did you not say yourself that the road was not as yet lighted, and that the place swarmed with public-houses and dreadful tipsy Irish bricklayers? Would you kill me, John?'

'My da—arling,' said John, with tremendous fondness, clutching Miss Lucy suddenly round the waist, and rapping the hand of that young person violently against his waistcoat,—'My da—arling, don't say such things, even in a joke. If I objected to the chambers, it is only because you, my love, with your birth and connections, ought to have a house of your own. The chambers are quite large enough and certainly quite good enough for me.' And so, after some more sweet parley on the part of these young people, it was agreed that they should take up their abode, when married, in a part of the house Number One hundred and something, Bedford Row.

It will be necessary to explain to the reader that John was no other than John Perkins, Esquire, of the Middle Temple, barrister-at-law, and that Miss Lucy was the daughter of the late Captain Gorgon, and Marianne Biggs, his wife. The Captain being of noble connections, younger son of a baronet, cousin to Lord X——, and related to the Y—— family, had angered all his relatives by marrying a very silly pretty young woman, who kept a ladies'-school at Canterbury. She had six hundred pounds to her fortune, which the Captain laid out in the purchase of a sweet travelling-carriage and dressing-case for himself; and going abroad

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with his lady, spent several years in the principal prisons of Europe, in one of which he died. His wife and daughter were meantime supported by the contributions of Mrs. Jemima Biggs, who still kept the ladies'-school.

At last a dear old relative—such a one as one reads of in romances—died and left seven thousand pounds apiece to the two sisters, whereupon the elder gave up schooling and retired to London; and the younger managed to live with some comfort and decency at Brussels, upon two hundred and ten pounds per annum. Mrs. Gorgon never touched a shilling of her capital, for the very good reason that it was placed entirely out of her reach; so that when she died, her daughter found herself in possession of a sum of money that is not always to be met with in this world.

Her aunt the baronet's lady, and her aunt the ex-schoolmistress, both wrote very pressing invitations to her, and she resided with each for six months after her arrival in England. Now, for a second time, she had come to Mrs. Biggs, Caroline Place, Mecklenburgh Square. It was under the roof of that respectable old lady that John Perkins, Esquire, being invited to take tea, wooed and won Miss Gorgon.

Having thus described the circumstances of Miss Gorgon's life, let us pass for a moment from that young lady, and lift up the veil of mystery which envelops the deeds and character of Perkins.

Perkins, too, was an orphan; and he and his Lucy, of summer evenings, when Sol descending lingered fondly yet about the minarets of the Foundling, and gilded the grassplots of Mecklenburgh Square—Perkins, I say, and Lucy would often sit together in the summer-house of that pleasure-ground, and muse upon the strange coincidences of their life. Lucy was motherless and fatherless; so too was Perkins. If Perkins was brotherless and sisterless, was not Lucy likewise an only child? Perkins

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was twenty-three: his age and Lucy's united, amounted to forty-six: and it was to be remarked, as a fact still more extraordinary, that while Lucy's relatives were *aunts*, John's were *uncles*. Mysterious spirit of love! let us treat thee with respect and whisper not too many of thy secrets. The fact is John and Lucy were a pair of fools (as every young couple *ought* to be who have hearts that are worth a farthing), and were ready to find coincidences, sympathies, hidden gushes of feeling, mystic unions of the soul, and what not, in every single circumstance that occurred from the rising of the sun to the going down thereof, and in the intervals. Bedford Row, where Perkins lived, is not very far from Mecklenburgh Square, and John used to say that he felt a comfort that his house and Lucy's were served by the same muffin-man.

Further comment is needless. A more honest, simple, clever, warm-hearted, soft, whimsical, romantical, high-spirited young fellow than John Perkins did not exist. When his father, Doctor Perkins, died, this, his only son, was placed under the care of John Perkins, Esquire, of the house of Perkins, Scully & Perkins, those celebrated attorneys in the trading town of Oldborough, which the second partner, William Pitt Scully, Esquire, represented in Parliament and in London.

All John's fortune was the house in Bedford Row, which, at his father's death, was let out into chambers, and brought in a clear hundred a year. Under his uncle's roof at Oldborough, where he lived with thirteen red-haired male and female cousins, he was only charged fifty pounds for board, clothes, and pocket-money, and the remainder of his rents was carefully put by for him until his majority. When he approached that period—when he came to belong to two spouting-clubs at Oldborough, among the young merchants and lawyers'-clerks—to blow the flute nicely and play a good game at billiards—to have written one or two smart things in the

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Oldborough Sentinel—to be fond of smoking (in which act he was discovered by his fainting aunt at three o'clock one morning)—in one word, when John Perkins arrived at manhood, he discovered that he was quite unfit to be an attorney, that he detested all the ways of his uncle's stern, dull, vulgar, regular, red-headed family, and he vowed that he would go to London and make his fortune. Thither he went, his aunt and cousins, who were all 'serious,' vowing that he was a lost boy; and when his history opens, John had been two years in the metropolis, inhabiting his own garrets; and a very nice compact set of apartments, looking into the back-garden, at this moment falling vacant, the prudent Lucy Gorgon had visited them, and vowed that she and her John should there commence housekeeping.

All these explanations are tedious, but necessary; and furthermore, it must be said, that as John's uncle's partner was the Liberal member for Oldborough, so Lucy's uncle was its Ministerial representative.

This gentleman, the brother of the deceased Captain Gorgon, lived at the paternal mansion of Gorgon Castle, and rejoiced in the name and title of Sir George Grimsby Gorgon. He, too, like his younger brother, had married a lady beneath his own rank in life; having espoused the daughter and heiress of Mr. Hicks, the great brewer at Oldborough, who held numerous mortgages on the Gorgon property, all of which he yielded up, together with his daughter Juliana, to the care of the baronet.

What Lady Gorgon was in character, this history will show. In person, if she may be compared to any vulgar animal, one of her father's heavy, healthy, broad-flanked, Roman-nosed white dray-horses might, to the poetic mind, appear to resemble her. At twenty she was a splendid creature, and though not at her full growth, yet remarkable for strength and sinew; at forty-five she was as fine a woman as any in His Majesty's dominions. Five feet seven in height, thirteen stone, her own teeth

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and hair, she looked as if she were the mother of a regiment of Grenadier Guards. She had three daughters of her own size, and at length, ten years after the birth of the last of the young ladies, a son—one son—George Augustus Frederick Grimsby Gorgon, the god-son of a royal duke, whose steady officer in waiting Sir George had been for many years.

It is needless to say, after entering so largely into a description of Lady Gorgon, that her husband was a little shrivelled wizen-faced creature, eight inches shorter than her Ladyship. This is the way of the world, as every single reader of this book must have remarked; for frolic love delights to join giants and pigmies of different sexes in the bonds of matrimony. When you saw her Ladyship, in flame-coloured satin and gorgeous toque and feathers, entering the drawing-room, as footmen along the stairs shouted melodiously, 'Sir George and Lady Gorgon,' you beheld in her company a small withered old gentleman, with powder and large royal household buttons, who tripped at her elbow as a little weak-legged colt does at the side of a stout mare.

The little General had been present at about a hundred and twenty pitched battles on Hounslow Heath and Wormwood Scrubs, but had never drawn his sword against an enemy. As might be expected, therefore, his talk and *tenue* were outrageously military. He had the whole Army List by heart—that is, as far as the field officers: all below them he scorned. A bugle at Gorgon Castle always sounded at breakfast and dinner: a gun announced sunset. He clung to his pigtail for many years after the army had forsaken that ornament, and could never be brought to think much of the Peninsular men for giving it up. When he spoke of the Duke, he used to call him '*My Lord Wellington—I recollect him as Captain Wellesley.*' He swore fearfully in conversation, was most regular at church, and regularly read to his

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family and domestics the morning and evening prayer; he bullied his daughters, *seemed* to bully his wife, who led him whither she chose; gave grand entertainments, and never asked a friend by chance; had splendid liveries, and starved his people; and was as dull, stingy, pompous, insolent, cringing, ill-tempered a little creature as ever was known.

With such qualities you may fancy that he was generally admired in society and by his country. So he was: and I never knew a man so endowed whose way through life was not safe—who had fewer pangs of conscience—more positive enjoyments—more respect shown to him—more favours granted to him, than such a one as my friend the General.

Her Ladyship was just suited to him, and they did in reality admire each other hugely. Previously to her marriage with the baronet, many love-passages had passed between her and William Pitt Scully, Esquire, the attorney; and there was especially one story, *à propos* of certain syllabubs and Sally-Lunn cakes, which seemed to show that matters had gone very far. Be this as it may, no sooner did the General (Major Gorgon as he was then) cast an eye on her, than Scully's five years' fabric of love was instantly dashed to the ground. She cut him pitilessly, cut Sally Scully, his sister, her dearest friend and confidante, and bestowed her big person upon the little aide-de-camp at the end of a fortnight's wooing. In the course of time their mutual fathers died; the Gorgon estates were unencumbered: patron of both the seats in the borough of Oldborough, and occupant of one, Sir George Grimsby Gorgon, Baronet, was a personage of no small importance.

He was, it scarcely need to be said, a Tory; and this was the reason why William Pitt Scully, Esquire, of the firm of Perkins & Scully, deserted those principles in which he had been bred and christened; deserted that church which he had frequented, for he could not

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bear to see Sir George and my Lady flaunting in their grand pew :—deserted, I say, the church, adopted the conventicle, and became one of the most zealous and eloquent supporters that Freedom has known in our time. Scully, of the house of Scully & Perkins, was a dangerous enemy. In five years from that marriage, which snatched from the jilted solicitor his heart's young affections, Sir George Gorgon found that he must actually spend seven hundred pounds to keep his two seats. At the next election, a Liberal was set up against his man, and actually ran him hard; and finally, at the end of eighteen years, the rejected Scully—the mean attorney—was actually the *first* Member for Oldborough, Sir George Grimsby Gorgon, Baronet, being only the second!

The agony of that day cannot be imagined—the dreadful curses of Sir George, who saw fifteen hundred a year robbed from under his very nose—the religious resignation of my Lady—the hideous window-smashing that took place at the 'Gorgon Arms,' and the discomfiture of the pelted Mayor and Corporation. The very next Sunday, Scully was reconciled to the church (or attended it in the morning, and the meeting twice in the afternoon), and as Doctor Snorter uttered the prayer for the High Court of Parliament, his eye, the eye of his whole party—turned towards Lady Gorgon and Sir George in a most unholy triumph. Sir George (who always stood during prayers, like a military man) fairly sank down among the hassocks, and Lady Gorgon was heard to sob as audibly as ever did little beadle-belaboured urchin.

Scully, when at Oldborough, came from that day forth to church. 'What,' said he, 'was it to him? were we not all brethren?' Old Perkins, however, kept religiously to the Square-toes congregation. In fact, to tell the truth, this subject had been debated between the partners, who saw the advantage of courting both the

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Establishment and the Dissenters—a manœuvre which, I need not say, is repeated in almost every country town in England, where a solicitor's house has this kind of power and connection.

Three months after this election came the races at Oldborough, and the race-ball. Gorgon was so infuriated by his defeat, that he gave 'the Gorgon cup and cover,' a matter of fifteen pounds. Scully, 'although anxious,' as he wrote from town, 'anxious beyond measure to preserve the breed of horses for which our beloved country has ever been famous, could attend no such sports as these, which but too often degenerated into vice.' It was voted a shabby excuse. Lady Gorgon was radiant in her barouche and four, and gladly became the patroness of the ball that was to ensue; and which all the gentry and townspeople, Tory and Whig, were in the custom of attending. The ball took place on the last day of the races. On that day, the walls of the market-house, the principal public buildings, and the 'Gorgon Arms Hotel' itself, were plastered with the following—

'*Letter from our Distinguished Representative, William P. Scully, Esquire, &c. &c.*

'House of Commons, *June* 1, 18—.

'My dear Heeltap,—You know my opinion about horse-racing, and though I blame neither you nor any brother Englishman who enjoys that manly sport, you will, I am sure, appreciate the conscientious motives which induce me not to appear among my friends and constituents on the festival of the 3rd, 4th, and 5th instant. If *I*, however, cannot allow my name to appear among your list of stewards, *one* at least of the representatives of Oldborough has no such scruples. Sir George Gorgon is among you: and though I differ from that honourable Baronet on more than *one vital point*, I am glad to think that he is with you. A gentleman, a soldier, a man of property in the county, how can he be

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better employed than in forwarding the county's amusements, and in forwarding the happiness of all?

'Had I no such scruples as those to which I have just alluded, I must still have refrained from coming among you. Your great Oldborough common-drainage and inclosure bill comes on to-morrow, and I shall be *at my post*. I am sure, if Sir George Gorgon were here, he and I should on this occasion vote side by side, and that party strife would be forgotten in the object of our common interest—*our dear native town*.

'There is, however, another occasion at hand, in which I shall be proud to meet him. Your ball is on the night of the 6th. Party forgotten—brotherly union—innocent mirth—beauty, *our dear town's beauty*, our daughters in the joy of their expanding loveliness, our matrons in the exquisite contemplation of their children's bliss—can you, can I, can Whig or Tory, can any Briton be indifferent to a scene like this, or refuse to join in this heart-stirring festival? If there *be* such let them pardon me—I, for one, my dear Heeltap, will be among you on Friday night—ay, and hereby invite all pretty Tory Misses, who are in want of a partner.

'I am here in the very midst of good things, you know, and we old folks like *a supper* after a dance. Please to accept a brace of bucks and a turtle, which come herewith. My worthy colleague, who was so liberal last year of his soup to the poor, will not, I trust, refuse to taste a little of Alderman Birch's—'tis offered on my part with hearty goodwill. Hey for the 6th, and *vive la joie!*

'Ever, my dear Heeltap, your faithful

'W. Pitt Scully.

'*P.S.*—Of course this letter is *strictly private*. Say that the venison, &c., came from a *well-wisher to Oldborough*.'

This amazing letter was published, in defiance of Mr. Scully's injunctions, by the enthusiastic Heeltap, who said bluntly, in a preface, 'that he saw no reason why Mr. Scully should be ashamed of his action, and he, for his part, was glad to let all friends at Oldborough know of it.'

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The allusion about the Gorgon soup was killing: thirteen paupers in Oldborough had, it was confidently asserted, died of it. Lady Gorgon, on the reading of this letter, was struck completely dumb; Sir George Gorgon was wild. Ten dozen of champagne was he obliged to send down to the 'Gorgon Arms,' to be added to the festival. He would have stayed away if he could, but he dared not.

At nine o'clock, he in general's uniform; his wife in blue satin and diamonds; his daughters in blue crape and white roses; his niece, Lucy Gorgon, in white muslin; his son, George Augustus Frederick Grimsby Gorgon, in a blue velvet jacket, sugar-loaf buttons, and nankeens, entered the north door of the ballroom, to much cheering, and the sound of 'God save the King!'

At that very same moment, and from the south door, issued William Pitt Scully, Esquire, M.P., and his staff. Mr. Scully had a brand-new blue coat and brass buttons, buff waistcoat, white kerseymere tights, pumps with large rosettes, and pink silk stockings.

'This wool,' said he to a friend, 'was grown on Oldborough sheep, this cloth was spun in Oldborough looms, these buttons were cast in an Oldborough manufactory, these shoes were made by an Oldborough tradesman, this *heart* first beat in Oldborough town, and pray Heaven may be buried there!'

Could anything resist a man like this? John Perkins, who had come down as one of Scully's aides-de-camp, in a fit of generous enthusiasm, leaped on a whist-table, flung up a pocket-handkerchief, and shrieked—'SCULLY FOR EVER!'

Heeltap, who was generally drunk, fairly burst into tears, and the grave tradesmen and Whig gentry, who had dined with the Member at his inn and accompanied him thence to the 'Gorgon Arms,' lifted their deep voices and shouted, 'Hear!' 'Good!' 'Bravo!'

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'Noble!' 'Scully for ever!' 'God bless him!' and 'Hurrah!'

The scene was tumultuously affecting; and when young Perkins sprang down from the table and came blushing up to the Member, that gentleman said, 'Thank you, Jack! *thank* you, my boy! THANK you,' in a way which made Perkins think that his supreme cup of bliss was quaffed; that he had but to die: for that life had no other such joy in store for him. Scully was Perkins's Napoleon—he yielded himself up to the attorney, body and soul.

Whilst this scene was going on under one chandelier of the ballroom, beneath the other scarlet little General Gorgon, sumptuous Lady Gorgon, the daughters and niece Gorgons, were standing surrounded by their Tory Court, who affected to sneer and titter at the Whig demonstrations which were taking place.

'What a howwid thmell of whithkey!' lisped Cornet Fitch, of the Dragoons, to Miss Lucy, confidentially. 'And thethe are what they call Whigth, are they? He! he!'

'They are drunk, —— me,—drunk, by ——!' said the General to the Mayor.

'*Which* is Scully?' said Lady Gorgon, lifting her glass gravely (she was at that very moment thinking of the syllabubs). 'Is it that tipsy man in the green coat, or that vulgar creature in the blue one?'

'Law, my Lady,' said the Mayoress, 'have you forgotten him? Why, that's him in blue and buff.'

'And a monthous fine man, too,' said Cornet Fitch. 'I wish we had him in our twoop—he'th thix feet thwee, if he'th an inch; ain't he, Genewal?'

No reply.

'And heavens! mamma,' shrieked the three Gorgons in a breath, 'see, one creature is on the whist-table. Oh, the wretch!'

'I'm sure he's very good-looking,' said Lucy simply.

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Lady Gorgon darted at her an angry look, and was about to say something very contemptuous, when, at that instant, John Perkins's shout taking effect, Master George Augustus Frederick Grimsby Gorgon, not knowing better, incontinently raised a small shout on his side.

'Hear! good! bravo!' exclaimed he; 'Scully for ever! Hurra-a-a-ay!' and fell skipping about like the Whigs opposite.

'Silence, you brute you!' groaned Lady Gorgon; and seizing him by the shirt-frill and coat-collar, carried him away to his nurse, who, with many other maids of the Whig and Tory parties, stood giggling and peeping at the landing-place.

Fancy how all these small incidents augmented the heap of Lady Gorgon's anger and injuries! She was a dull phlegmatic woman for the most part, and contented herself generally with merely despising her neighbours; but oh! what a fine active hatred raged in her bosom for victorious Scully! At this moment Mr. Perkins had finished shaking hands with his Napoleon—Napoleon seemed bent upon some tremendous enterprise. He was looking at Lady Gorgon very hard.

'She's a fine woman,' said Scully thoughtfully; he was still holding the hand of Perkins. And then, after a pause, 'Gad, I think I'll try.'

'Try what, sir?'

'She's a *deuced* fine woman!' burst out again the tender solicitor. 'I *will* go. Springer, tell the fiddlers to strike up.'

Springer scuttled across the room, and gave the leader of the band a knowing nod. Suddenly, 'God save the King' ceased, and 'Sir Roger de Coverley' began. The rival forces eyed each other; Mr. Scully, accompanied by his friend, came forward, looking very red, and fumbling two large kid gloves.

'*He's going to ask me to dance*,' hissed out Lady Gorgon,

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with a dreadful intuition, and she drew back behind her lord.

'D—— it, madam, *then dance* with him!' said the General. 'Don't you see that the scoundrel is carrying it all his own way! —— him! and —— him! and —— him!' (All of which dashes the reader may fill up with oaths of such strength as may be requisite).

'General!' cried Lady Gorgon, but could say no more. Scully was before her.

'Madam!' exclaimed the Liberal Member for Oldborough, 'in a moment like this—I say—that is—that on the present occasion—your Ladyship—unaccustomed as I am—pooh, psha—*will* your Ladyship give me the distinguished honour and pleasure of going down the country dance with your Ladyship?'

An immense heave of her Ladyship's ample chest was perceptible. Yards of blond lace, which might be compared to a foam of the sea, were agitated at the same moment, and by the same mighty emotion. The river of diamonds which flowed round her Ladyship's neck, seemed to swell and to shine more than ever. The tall plumes on her ambrosial head bowed down beneath the storm. In other words, Lady Gorgon, in a furious rage, which she was compelled to restrain, trembled, drew up, and bowing majestically, said,—

'Sir, I shall have much pleasure.' With this, she extended her hand. Scully, trembling, thrust forward one of his huge kid gloves, and led her to the head of the country-dance. John Perkins—who I presume had been drinking pretty freely, so as to have forgotten his ordinary bashfulness—looked at the three Gorgons in blue, then at the pretty smiling one in white, and stepping up to her, without the smallest hesitation, asked her if she would dance with him. The young lady smilingly agreed. The great example of Scully and Lady Gorgon was followed by all dancing men and women. Political enmities were forgotten. Whig

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voters invited Tory voters' wives to the dance. The daughters of Reform accepted the hands of the sons of Conservatism. The reconciliation of the Romans and Sabines was not more touching than this sweet fusion. Whack—whack! Mr. Springer clapped his hands; and the fiddlers adroitly obeying the cheerful signal, began playing 'Sir Roger de Coverley' louder than ever.

I do not know by what extraordinary charm (*nescio quâ præter solitum*, &c.), but young Perkins, who all his life had hated country-dances, was delighted with this one, and skipped and laughed, poussetting, crossing, down-the-middling, with his merry little partner, till every one of the bettermost sort of the thirty-nine couples had dropped panting away, and till the youngest Miss Gorgon, coming up to his partner, said in a loud hissing scornful whisper, 'Lucy, mamma thinks you have danced quite enough with this—this person.' And Lucy, blushing, starting back, and looking at Perkins in a very melancholy way, made him a little curtsey, and went off to the Gorgonian party with her cousin. Perkins was too frightened to lead her back to her place—too frightened at first, and then too angry. 'Person!' said he: his soul swelled with a desperate republicanism: he went back to his patron more of a Radical than ever.

He found that gentleman in the solitary tea-room, pacing up and down before the observant landlady and handmaidens, of the 'Gorgon Arms,' wiping his brows, gnawing his fingers—his ears looming over his stiff white shirt-collar as red as fire. Once more the great man seized John Perkins's hand as the latter came up.

'D—— the aristocrats!' roared the ex-follower of Square-toes.

'And so say I! but what's the matter, sir?'

'What's the matter?—Why, that woman—that infernal, haughty, straitlaced, cold-blooded brewer's daughter! I loved that woman, sir—I *kissed* that woman, sir, twenty years ago: we were all but

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engaged, sir: we've walked for hours and hours, sir—us and the governess—I've got a lock of her hair, sir, among my papers now; and to-night, would you believe it?—as soon as she got to the bottom of the set, away she went—not one word would she speak to me all the way down: and when I wanted to lead her to her place, and asked her if she would have a glass of negus, "Sir," says she, "I have done my duty; I bear no malice; but I consider you a traitor to Sir George Gorgon's family—a traitor and an upstart! I consider your speaking to me as a piece of insolent vulgarity, and beg you will leave me to myself!" There's her speech, sir. Twenty people heard it, and all of her Tory set too. I'll tell you what, Jack: at the next election I'll put *you* up. O that woman! that woman!—and to think that I love her still!' Here Mr. Scully paused and fiercely consoled himself by swallowing three cups of Mrs. Rincer's green tea.

The fact is, that Lady Gorgon's passion had completely got the better of her reason. Her Ladyship was naturally cold, and artificially extremely squeamish; and when this great red-faced enemy of hers looked tenderly at her through his red little eyes, and squeezed her hand and attempted to renew old acquaintance, she felt such an intolerable disgust at his triumph, at his familiarity, and at the remembrance of her own former liking for him, that she gave utterance to the speech above correctly reported. The Tories were delighted with her spirit, and Cornet Fitch, with much glee, told the story to the General; but that officer, who was at whist with some of his friends, flung down his cards, and coming up to his lady, said briefly,—

'Madam, you are a fool!'

'I will *not* stay here to be bearded by that disgusting man!—Mr. Fitch, call my people.—Henrietta, bring Miss Lucy from that linendraper with whom she is dancing. I will not stay, General, once for all.'

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Henrietta ran—she hated her cousin! Cornet Fitch was departing. 'Stop, Fitch,' said Sir George, seizing him by the arm. 'Your are a fool, Lady Gorgon,' said he, 'and I repeat it—a —— fool! This fellow Scully is carrying all before him: he has talked with everybody, laughed with everybody—and you, with your infernal airs—a brewer's daughter, by ——, must sit like a queen and not speak to a soul! You've lost me one seat of my borough, with your infernal pride—fifteen hundred a year, by Jove!—and you think you will bully me out of another. No, madam, you *shall* stay, and stay supper too; and the girls shall dance with every cursed chimney-sweep and butcher in the room: they shall—confound me!'

Her Ladyship saw that it was necessary to submit; and Mr. Springer, the master of the ceremonies, was called, and requested to point out some eligible partners for the young ladies. One went off with a Whig auctioneer; another figured in a quadrille with a very Liberal apothecary; and the third, Miss Henrietta, remained.

'Hallo you, sir!' roared the little General to John Perkins, who was passing by. John turned round and faced him.

'You were dancing with my niece just now—show us your skill now, and dance with one of my daughters. Stand up, Miss Henrietta Gorgon—Mr. What's-your-name?'

'My name,' said John, with marked and majestic emphasis, 'is PERKINS.' And he looked towards Lucy, who dared not look again.

'Miss Gorgon—Mr. Perkins. There, now go and dance.'

'Mr. Perkins regrets, madam,' said John, making a bow to Miss Henrietta, 'that he is not able to dance this evening. I am this moment obliged to look to the supper; but you will find, no doubt, some other PERSON who will have much pleasure.'

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'Go to ——, sir!' screamed the General, starting up, and shaking his cane.

'Calm yourself, dearest George,' said Lady Gorgon, clinging fondly to him. Fitch twiddled his moustaches. Miss Henrietta Gorgon stared with open mouth. The silks of the surrounding dowagers rustled—the countenances of all looked grave.

'I will follow you, sir, wherever you please; and you may hear of me whenever you like,' said Mr. Perkins, bowing and retiring. He heard little Lucy sobbing in a corner. He was lost at once—lost in love; he felt as if he could combat fifty generals! he never was so happy in his life.

The supper came: but as that meal cost five shillings a head, General Gorgon dismissed the four spinsters of his family homewards in the carriage, and so saved himself a pound. This added to Jack Perkins's wrath; he had hoped to have seen Miss Lucy once more. He was a steward, and, in the General's teeth, would have done his duty. He was thinking how he would have helped her to the most delicate chicken-wings and blancmanges, how he *would* have made her take champagne. Under the noses of indignant aunt and uncle, what glorious fun it would have been!

Out of place as Mr. Scully's present was, and though Lady Gorgon and her party sneered at the vulgar notion of venison and turtle for supper, all the world at Oldborough ate very greedily of those two substantial dishes; and the Mayor's wife became from that day forth a mortal enemy of the Gorgons: for, sitting near her Ladyship, who refused the proffered soup and meat, the Mayoress thought herself obliged to follow this disagreeable example. She sent away the plate of turtle with a sigh, saying, however, to the baronet's lady, 'I thought, mem, that the *Lord Mayor of London* always had turtle to his supper?'

'And what if he didn't, Biddy?' said his Honour the

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Mayor; 'a good thing's a good thing, and here goes!' wherewith he plunged his spoon into the savoury mess. The Mayoress, as we have said, dared not: but she hated Lady Gorgon, and remembered it at the next election.

The pride, in fact, and insolence of the Gorgon party rendered every person in the room hostile to them: so soon as, gorged with meat, they began to find that courage which Britons invariably derive from their victuals. The show of the Gorgon plate seemed to offend the people. The Gorgon champagne was a long time, too, in making its appearance. Arrive, however, it did. The people were waiting for it; the young ladies, not accustomed to that drink, declined pledging their admirers until it was produced: the men, too, despised the bucellas and sherry, and were looking continually towards the door. At last, Mr. Rincer, the landlord, Mr. Hock, Sir George's butler, and sundry others entered the room. Bang! went the corks—fizz the foaming liquor sparkled into all sorts of glasses that were held out for its reception. Mr. Hock helped Sir George and his party, who drank with great gusto; the wine which was administered to the persons immediately around Mr. Scully was likewise pronounced to be good. But Mr. Perkins, who had taken his seat among the humbler individuals, and in the very middle of the table, observed that all these persons, after drinking, made to each other very wry and ominous faces, and whispered much. He tasted his wine; it was a villainous compound of sugar, vitriol, soda-water, and green gooseberries. At this moment a great clatter of forks was made by the president's and vice-president's party. Silence for a toast—'twas silence all.

'Landlord,' said Mr. Perkins, starting up (the rogue, where did his impudence come from?) 'have you any champagne of *your own?*'

'Silence! down!' roared the Tories, the ladies looking

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aghast. 'Silence, sit down you!' shrieked the well-known voice of the General.

'I beg your pardon, General,' said young John Perkins: 'but where *could* you have bought this champagne? My worthy friend I know is going to propose the ladies; let us at any rate drink such a toast in good wine.' ('Hear, hear!') 'Drink her Ladyship's health in *this* stuff? I declare to goodness I would sooner drink it in beer!'

No pen can describe the uproar which arose: the anguish of the Gorgonites—the shrieks, jeers, cheers, ironic cries of 'Swipes!' &c., which proceeded from the less genteel but more enthusiastic Scullyites.

'This vulgarity is too much,' said Lady Gorgon, rising; and Mrs. Mayoress and the ladies of the party did so too.

The General, two squires, the clergyman, the Gorgon apothecary and attorney, with their respective ladies, followed her: they were plainly beaten from the field. Such of the Tories as dared remained, and in inglorious compromise shared the jovial Whig feast.

'Gentlemen and ladies,' hiccupped Mr. Heeltap, 'I'll give you a toast. "Champagne to our real—hic—friends," no, "Real champagne to our friends," and—hic—pooh! "Champagne to our friends, and real pain to our enemies,'—huzzay!"

The Scully faction on this day bore the victory away, and if the polite reader has been shocked by certain vulgarities on the part of Mr. Scully and his friends, he must remember *imprimis* that Oldborough was an inconsiderable place—that the inhabitants thereof were chiefly tradespeople, not of refined habits—that Mr. Scully himself had only for three months mingled among the aristocracy—that his young friend Perkins was violently angry—and finally, and to conclude, that the proud vulgarity of the great Sir George Gorgon and his family was infinitely more odious and contemptible

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than the mean vulgarity of the Scullyites and their leader.

Immediately after this event, Mr. Scully and his young friend Perkins returned to town; the latter to his garrets in Bedford Row—the former to his apartments on the first floor of the same house. He lived here to superintend his legal business: his London agents, Messrs. Higgs, Biggs, & Blatherwick, occupying the ground floor; the junior partner, Mr. Gustavus Blatherwick, the second flat of the house. Scully made no secret of his profession or residence: he was an attorney, and proud of it; he was the grandson of a labourer, and thanked God for it; he had made his fortune by his own honest labour, and why should he be ashamed of it?

And now, having explained at full length who the several heroes and heroines of this history were, and how they conducted themselves in the country, let us describe their behaviour in London, and the great events which occurred there.

You must know that Mr. Perkins bore away the tenderest recollections of the young lady with whom he had danced at the Oldborough ball, and, having taken particular care to find out where she dwelt when in the metropolis, managed soon to become acquainted with Aunt Biggs, and made himself so amiable to that lady, that she begged he would pass all his disengaged evenings at her lodgings in Caroline Place. Mrs. Biggs was perfectly aware that the young gentleman did not come for her bohea and muffins, so much as for the sweeter conversation of her niece, Miss Gorgon; but seeing that these two young people were of an age when ideas of love and marriage will spring up, do what you will; seeing that her niece had a fortune, and Mr. Perkins had the prospect of a place, and was moreover a very amiable and well-disposed young fellow, she thought her niece could not do better than marry him; and Miss Gorgon thought so too. Now the public will be able to under-

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stand the meaning of that important conversation which is recorded at the very commencement of this history.

Lady Gorgon and her family were likewise in town; but, when in the metropolis, they never took notice of their relative, Miss Lucy: the idea of acknowledging an ex-schoolmistress living in Mecklenburgh Square being much too preposterous for a person of my Lady Gorgon's breeding and fashion. She did not, therefore, know of the progress which sly Perkins was making all this while; for Lucy Gorgon did not think it was at all necessary to inform her Ladyship how deeply she was smitten by the wicked young gentleman who had made all the disturbance at the Oldborough ball.

The intimacy of these young persons had, in fact, become so close, that on a certain sunshiny Sunday in December, after having accompanied Aunt Biggs to church, they had pursued their walk as far as that rendezvous of lovers, the Regent's Park, and were talking of their coming marriage, with much confidential tenderness, before the bears in the Zoological Gardens.

Miss Lucy was ever and anon feeding those interesting animals with buns, to perform which act of charity she had clambered up on the parapet which surrounds their den. Mr. Perkins was below; and Miss Lucy, having distributed her buns, was on the point of following,—but whether from timidity, or whether from a desire to do young Perkins an essential service, I know not: however, she found herself quite unwilling to jump down unaided.

'My dearest John,' said she, 'I never can jump that.'

Whereupon John stepped up, put one hand round Lucy's waist; and as one of hers gently fell upon his shoulder, Mr. Perkins took the other and said,—

'Now jump.'

Hoop! jump she did, and so excessively active and clever was Mr. John Perkins, that he jumped Miss Lucy plump into the middle of a group formed of—

Lady Gorgon;

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The Misses Gorgon;
Master George Augustus Frederick Grimsby Gorgon;
And a footman, poodle, and French governess: who had all been for two or three minutes listening to the billings and cooings of these imprudent young lovers.

CHAPTER II

SHOWS HOW THE PLOT BEGAN TO THICKEN IN OR ABOUT BEDFORD ROW

'Miss Lucy!'

'Upon my word!'

'I'm hanged if it aren't Lucy! How do, Lucy?' uttered Lady, the Misses, and Master Gorgon in a breath.

Lucy came forward, bending down her ambrosial curls, and blushing, as a modest young woman should: for, in truth, the scrape was very awkward. And as for John Perkins, he made a start, and then a step forwards, and then two backwards, and then began laying hands upon his black satin stock—in short, the sun did not shine at that moment upon a man who looked so exquisitely foolish.

'Miss Lucy Gorgon, is your aunt—is Mrs. Briggs here?' said Lady Gorgon, drawing herself up with much state.

'Mrs. Biggs, aunt?' said Lucy demurely.

'Biggs or Briggs, madam, it is not of the slightest consequence. I presume that persons in my rank of life are not expected to know everybody's name in Magdeburg Square?' (Lady Gorgon had a house in Baker Street, and a dismal house it was.) '*Not* here,' continued she, rightly interpreting Lucy's silence, 'NOT here?—and may I ask how long is it that young ladies have been allowed to walk abroad without chaperons, and

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to—to take a part in such scenes as that which we have just seen acted?'

To this question—and indeed it was rather difficult to answer—Miss Gorgon had no reply. There were the six grey eyes of her cousins glowering at her; there was George Augustus Frederick examining her with an air of extreme wonder, Mademoiselle the governess turning her looks demurely away, and awful Lady Gorgon glancing fiercely at her in front. Not mentioning the footman and poodle, what could a poor modest timid girl plead before such an inquisition, especially when she was clearly guilty? Add to this, that as Lady Gorgon, that majestic woman, always remarkable for her size and insolence of demeanour, had planted herself in the middle of the path, and spoke at the extreme pitch of her voice, many persons walking in the neighbourhood had heard her Ladyship's speech and stopped, and seemed disposed to await the rejoinder.

'For Heaven's sake, aunt, don't draw a crowd around us,' said Lucy, who, indeed, was glad of the only escape that lay in her power. 'I will tell you of the—of the circumstances of—of my engagement with this gentleman—with Mr. Perkins,' added she, in a softer tone—so soft that the *'erkins* was quite inaudible.

'A Mr. What? An engagement without consulting your guardians!' screamed her Ladyship. 'This must be looked to! Jerningham, call round my carriage. Mademoiselle, you will have the goodness to walk home with Master Gorgon, and carry him, if you please, where there is wet; and, girls, as the day is fine, you will do likewise. Jerningham, you will attend the young ladies. Miss Gorgon, I will thank you to follow me immediately.' And so saying, and looking at the crowd with ineffable scorn, and at Mr. Perkins not at all, the lady bustled away forwards, the files of Gorgon daughters and governess closing round and enveloping poor Lucy, who found herself carried forward against

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her will, and in a minute seated in her aunt's coach, along with that tremendous person.

Her case was bad enough, but what was it to Perkins's? Fancy his blank surprise and rage at having his love thus suddenly ravished from him, and his delicious *tête-à-tête* interrupted. He managed, in an inconceivably short space of time, to conjure up half-a-million obstacles to his union. What should he do? he would rush on to Baker Street, and wait there until his Lucy left Lady Gorgon's house.

He could find no vehicle in the Regent's Park, and was in consequence obliged to make his journey on foot. Of course, he nearly killed himself with running, and ran so quick, that he was just in time to see the two ladies step out of Lady Gorgon's carriage at her own house, and to hear Jerningham's fellow-footman roar to the Gorgonian coachman, 'Half-past seven!' at which hour we are, to this day, convinced that Lady Gorgon was going out to dine. Mr. Jerningham's associate having banged-to the door, with an insolent look towards Perkins, who was prying in with the most suspicious and indecent curiosity, retired, exclaiming, 'That chap has a hi to our greatcoats, I reckon!' and left John Perkins to pace the street and be miserable.

John Perkins then walked resolutely up and down dismal Baker Street, determined on an *éclaircissement*. He was for some time occupied in thinking how it was that the Gorgons were not at church, they who made such a parade of piety; and John Perkins smiled as he passed the chapel, and saw that two *charity sermons* were to be preached that day—and therefore it was that General Gorgon read prayers to his family at home in the morning.

Perkins, at last, saw that little General, in blue frock-coat and spotless buff gloves, saunter scowling home; and half-an-hour before his arrival had witnessed the entrance of Jerningham, and the three gaunt Miss

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Gorgons, poodle, son-and-heir, and French governess, protected by him, into Sir George's mansion.

'Can she be going to stay all night?' mused poor John, after being on the watch for three hours: 'that footman is the only person who has left the house:' when presently, to his inexpressible delight, he saw a very dirty hackney-coach clatter up to the Gorgon door, out of which first issued the ruby plush breeches and stalwart calves of Mr. Jerningham; these were followed by his body, and then the gentleman, ringing modestly, was admitted.

Again the door opened: a lady came out, nor was she followed by the footman, who crossed his legs at the door-post and allowed her to mount the jingling vehicle as best she might. Mr. Jerningham had witnessed the scene in the Park Gardens, had listened to the altercation through the library keyhole, and had been mighty sulky at being ordered to call a coach for this young woman. He did not therefore deign to assist her to mount.

But there was *one* who did! Perkins was by the side of his Lucy: he had seen her start back and cry, 'La, John!'—had felt her squeeze his arm—had mounted with her into the coach, and then shouted with a voice of thunder to the coachman, 'Caroline Place, Mecklenburgh Square.'

But Mr. Jerningham would have been much more surprised and puzzled if he had waited one minute longer, and seen this Mr. Perkins, who had so gallantly escaladed the hackney-coach, step out of it with the most mortified, miserable, chap-fallen countenance possible.

The fact is, he had found poor Lucy sobbing fit to break her heart, and instead of consoling her, as he expected, he only seemed to irritate her further: for she said, 'Mr. Perkins—I beg—I insist, that you leave the carriage.' And when Perkins made some movement

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(which, not being in the vehicle at the time, we have never been able to comprehend), she suddenly sprang from the back-seat and began pulling at a large piece of cord which communicated with the wrist of the gentleman driving; and, screaming to him at the top of her voice, bade him immediately stop.

This Mr. Coachman did, with a curious, puzzled, grinning air.

Perkins descended, and on being asked, 'Vere ham I to drive the young 'oman, sir?' I am sorry to say muttered something like an oath, and uttered the above-mentioned words, 'Caroline Place, Mecklenburgh Square,' in a tone which I should be inclined to describe as both dogged and sheepish—very different from that cheery voice which he had used when he first gave the order.

Poor Lucy, in the course of those fatal three hours which had passed while Mr. Perkins was pacing up and down Baker Street, had received a lecture which lasted exactly one hundred and eighty minutes—from her aunt first, then from her uncle, whom we have seen marching homewards, and often from both together.

Sir George Gorgon and his lady poured out such a flood of advice and abuse against the poor girl, that she came away from the interview quite timid and cowering; and when she saw John Perkins (the sly rogue! how well he thought he had managed the trick!) she shrank from him as if he had been a demon of wickedness, ordered him out of the carriage, and went home by herself, convinced that she had committed some tremendous sin.

While, then, her coach jingled away to Caroline Place, Perkins, once more alone, bent his steps in the same direction. A desperate, heart-stricken man, he passed by the beloved's door, saw lights in the front drawing-room, felt probably that she was there; but he could not go in. Moodily he paced down Doughty Street, and

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turning abruptly into Bedford Row, rushed into his own chambers, where Mrs. Snooks, the laundress, had prepared his humble Sabbath meal.

A cheerful fire blazed in his garret, and Mrs. Snooks had prepared for him the favourite blade-bone he loved (blest four-days' dinner for a bachelor—roast, cold, hashed, grilled blade-bone, the fourth being better than the first); but although he usually did rejoice in this meal—ordinarily, indeed, grumbling that there was not enough to satisfy him—he, on this occasion, after two mouthfuls, flung down his knife and fork, and buried his two claws in his hair.

'Snooks,' said he at last, very moodily, 'remove this d—— mutton, give me my writing things, and some hot brandy-and-water.'

This was done without much alarm: for you must know that Perkins used to dabble in poetry, and ordinarily prepared himself for composition by this kind of stimulus.

He wrote hastily a few lines.

'Snooks, put on your bonnet,' said he, 'and carry this—*you know where!*' he added, in a hollow, heart-breaking tone of voice, that affected poor Snooks almost to tears. She went, however, with the note, which was to this purpose:—

'Lucy! Lucy! my soul's love—what, what has happened? I am writing this'—(*a gulp of brandy-and-water*)—'in a state bordering on distraction — madness — insanity' (*another*). 'Why did you send me out of the coach in that cruel, cruel way? Write to me a word, a line—tell me, tell me, I may come to you—and leave me not in this agonising condition; your faithful' (*glog—glog—glog—the whole glass*)——

'J. P.'

He never signed John Perkins in full—he couldn't, it was so unromantic.

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Well, this missive was despatched by Mrs. Snooks, and Perkins, in a fearful state of excitement, haggard, wild, and with more brandy-and-water, awaited the return of his messenger.

When at length, after about an absence of forty years, as it seemed to him, the old lady returned with a large packet, Perkins seized it with a trembling hand, and was yet more frightened to see the handwriting of Mrs. or Miss Biggs.

'My dear Mr. Perkins,' she began—'Although I am not your soul's adored, I performed her part for once, since I have read your letter, as I told her. You need not be very much alarmed, although Lucy is at this moment in bed and unwell; for the poor girl has had a sad scene at her grand uncle's house in Baker Street, and came home very much affected. Rest, however, will restore her, for she is not one of your nervous sort; and I hope when you come in the morning, you will see her as blooming as she was when you went out to-day on that unlucky walk.

'See what Sir George Gorgon says of us all! You won't challenge him, I know, as he is to be your uncle, and so I may show you his letter.

"Good-night, my dear John. Do not go *quite* distracted before morning; and believe me your loving aunt,

'Jemima Biggs.'

'Baker Street, 11*th December*.

'Major-General Sir George Gorgon has heard with the utmost disgust and surprise of the engagement which Miss Lucy Gorgon has thought fit to form.

'The Major-General cannot conceal his indignation at the share which Miss Biggs has taken in this disgraceful transaction.

'Sir George Gorgon puts an absolute veto upon all further communication between his niece and the low-born adventurer who has been admitted into her society, and begs to say that Lieutenant Fitch, of the Lifeguards, is the gentleman who he intends shall marry Miss Gorgon.

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'It is the Major-General's wish, that on the 28th Miss Gorgon should be ready to come to his house, in Baker Street, where she will be more safe from impertinent intrusions than she has been in Mucklebury Square.

'MRS. BIGGS,
'*Caroline Place*,
'*Mecklenburgh Square*.'

When poor John Perkins read this epistle blank rage and wonder filled his soul, at the audacity of the little General, who thus, without the smallest title in the world, pretended to dispose of the hand and fortune of his niece. The fact is, that Sir George had such a transcendent notion of his own dignity and station, that it never for a moment entered his head that his niece, or anybody else connected with him, should take a single step in life without previously receiving his orders; and Mr. Fitch, a baronet's son, having expressed an admiration of Lucy, Sir George had determined that his suit should be accepted, and really considered Lucy's preference of another as downright treason.

John Perkins determined on the death of Fitch as the very least reparation that should satisfy him; and vowed too that some of the General's blood should be shed for the words which he had dared to utter.

We have said that William Pitt Scully, Esquire, M.P., occupied the first floor of Mr. Perkins's house in Bedford Row: and the reader is further to be informed that an immense friendship had sprung up between these two gentlemen. The fact is, that poor John was very much flattered by Scully's notice, and began in a very short time to fancy himself a political personage; for he had made several of Scully's speeches, written more than one letter from him to his constituents, and, in a word, acted as his gratis clerk. At least a guinea a week did Mr. Perkins save to the pockets of Mr. Scully, and with hearty goodwill too, for he adored the great William

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Pitt, and believed every word that dropped from the pompous lips of that gentleman.

Well, after having discussed Sir George Gorgon's letter, poor Perkins, in the utmost fury of mind that his darling should be slandered so, feeling a desire for fresh air, determined to descend to the garden and smoke a cigar in that rural quiet spot. The night was very calm. The moonbeams slept softly upon the herbage of Gray's Inn gardens, and bathed with silver splendour Theobald's Row. A million of little frisky twinkling stars attended their queen, who looked with bland round face upon their gambols, as they peeped in and out from the azure heavens. Along Gray's Inn wall a lazy row of cabs stood listlessly, for who would call a cab on such a night? Meanwhile their drivers, at the alehouse near, smoked the short pipe or quaffed the foaming beer. Perhaps from Gray's Inn Lane some broken sounds of Irish revelry might rise. Issuing perhaps from Raymond Buildings gate, six lawyers' clerks might whoop a tipsy song—or the loud watchman yell the passing hour; but beyond this all was silence; and young Perkins, as he sat in the summer-house at the bottom of the garden, and contemplated the peaceful heaven, felt some influences of it entering into his soul, and almost forgetting revenge, thought but of peace and love.

Presently, he was aware there was some one else pacing the garden. Who could it be?—Not Blatherwick, for he passed the Sabbath with his grandmamma at Clapham; not Scully surely, for he always went to Bethesda Chapel, and to a select prayer-meeting afterwards. Alas! it *was* Scully; for though that gentleman *said* that he went to chapel, we have it for a fact that he did not always keep his promise, and was at this moment employed in rehearsing an extempore speech, which he proposed to deliver at St. Stephen's.

'Had I, sir,' spouted he, with folded arms, slowly pacing to and fro—'Had I, sir, entertained the smallest

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possible intention of addressing the House on the present occasion—hum, on the present occasion—I would have endeavoured to prepare myself in a way that should have at least shown my sense of the greatness of the subject before the House's consideration, and the nature of the distinguished audience I have the honour to address. I am, sir, a plain man—born of the people—myself one of the people, having won, thank Heaven, an honourable fortune and position by my own honest labour; and standing here, as I do——'

. . . . . .

Here Mr. Scully (it may be said that he never made a speech without bragging about himself: and an excellent plan it is, for people cannot help believing you at last)—here, I say, Mr. Scully, who had one arm raised, felt himself suddenly tipped on the shoulder, and heard a voice saying, 'Your money or your life!'

The honourable gentleman twirled round as if he had been shot; the papers on which a great part of this impromptu was written dropped from his lifted hand, and some of them were actually borne on the air into neighbouring gardens. The man was, in fact, in the direst fright.

'It's only I,' said Perkins, with rather a forced laugh, when he saw the effect that his wit had produced.

'Only you! And pray, what the dev—— what right have you to—to come upon a man of my rank in that way, and disturb me in the midst of very important meditations?' asked Mr. Scully, beginning to grow fierce.

'I want your advice,' said Perkins, 'on a matter of the very greatest importance to me. You know my idea of marrying?'

'Marry!' said Scully; 'I thought you had given up that silly scheme. And how, pray, do you intend to live?'

'Why, my intended has a couple of hundreds a year,

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and my clerkship in the Tape and Sealing-Wax Office will be as much more.'

'Clerkship—Tape and Sealing-Wax Office—Government sinecure!—Why, good heavens! John Perkins, you don't tell *me* that you are going to accept any such thing?'

'It *is* a very small salary, certainly,' said John, who had a decent notion of his own merits; but consider, six months' vacation, two hours in the day, and those spent over the newspapers. After all, it's——'

'After all it's a swindle,' roared out Mr. Scully—'a swindle upon the country; an infamous tax upon the people, who starve that you may fatten in idleness. But take this clerkship in the Tape and Sealing-Wax Office,' continued the patriot, his bosom heaving with noble indignation, and his eye flashing the purest fire,—'*Take* this clerkship, John Perkins, and sanction tyranny, by becoming one of its agents; sanction dishonesty by sharing in its plunder—do this, BUT never more be friend of mine. Had I a child,' said the patriot, clasping his hands and raising his eyes to heaven, 'I would rather see him dead, sir—dead, dead at my feet, than the servant of a Government which all honest men despise.' And here, giving a searching glance at Perkins, Mr. Scully began tramping up and down the garden in a perfect fury.

'Good heavens!' exclaimed the timid John Perkins—'don't say *so*. My dear Mr. Scully, I'm not the dishonest character you suppose me to be—I never looked at the matter in this light. I'll—I'll consider of it. I'll tell Crampton that I will give up the place; but for Heaven's sake don't let me forfeit *your* friendship, which is dearer to me than any place in the world.'

Mr. Scully pressed his hand, and said nothing; and though their interview lasted a full half-hour longer, during which they paced up and down the gravel walk, we shall not breathe a single syllable of their conversation, as it has nothing to do with our tale.

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The next morning, after an interview with Miss Lucy, John Perkins, Esquire, was seen to issue from Mrs. Biggs's house, looking particularly pale, melancholy, and thoughtful; and he did not stop until he reached a certain door in Downing Street, where was the office of a certain great Minister, and the offices of the clerks in his Lordship's department.

The head of them was Mr. Josiah Crampton, who has now to be introduced to the public. He was a little old gentleman, some sixty years of age, maternal uncle to John Perkins; a bachelor, who had been about forty-two years employed in the department of which he was now the head.

After waiting four hours in an ante-room, where a number of Irishmen, some newspaper editors, many pompous-looking political personages asking for the 'first lord,' a few sauntering clerks, and numbers of swift active messengers passed to and fro;—after waiting for four hours, making drawings on the blotting-book, and reading the *Morning Post* for that day week, Mr. Perkins was informed that he might go into his uncle's room, and did so accordingly.

He found a little hard old gentleman seated at a table covered with every variety of sealing-wax, blotting-paper, envelopes, despatch-boxes, green tapers, &c. &c. An immense fire was blazing in the grate, an immense sheet-almanack hung over that, a screen, three or four chairs, and a faded Turkey carpet, formed the rest of the furniture of this remarkable room—which I have described thus particularly, because, in the course of a long official life, I have remarked that such is the invariable decoration of political rooms.

'Well, John,' said the little hard old gentleman, pointing to an arm-chair, 'I'm told you've been here since eleven. Why the deuce do you come so early?'

'I had important business,' answered Mr. Perkins stoutly; and as his uncle looked up with a comical

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expression of wonder, John began in a solemn tone to deliver a little speech which he had composed, and which proved him to be a very worthy, easy, silly fellow.

'Sir,' said Mr. Perkins, 'you have known for some time past the nature of my political opinions, and the intimacy which I have had the honour to form with one —with some of the leading members of the Liberal party.' (A grin from Mr. Crampton.) 'When first, by your kindness, I was promised the clerkship in the Tape and Sealing-Wax Office, my opinions were not formed as they are now; and having taken the advice of the gentlemen with whom I act,'—(an enormous grin) —'the advice, I say, of the gentlemen with whom I act, and the counsel likewise of my own conscience, I am compelled, with the deepest grief, to say, my dear uncle, that I—I——'

'That you — what, sir?' exclaimed little Mr. Crampton, bouncing off his chair. 'You don't mean to say that you are such a fool as to decline the place?'

'I do decline the place,' said Perkins, whose blood rose at the word 'fool.' 'As a man of honour, I cannot take it.'

'Not take it! and how are you to live? On the rent of that house of yours! For, by gad, sir, if you give up the clerkship, I never will give you a shilling.'

'It cannot be helped,' said Mr. Perkins, looking as much like a martyr as he possibly could, and thinking himself a very fine fellow. 'I have talents, sir, which I hope to cultivate; and am member of a profession by which a man may hope to rise to the very highest offices of the State.'

'Profession, talents, offices of the State! Are you mad, John Perkins, that you come to me with such insufferable twaddle as this? Why, do you think if you *had* been capable of rising at the bar, I would have taken so much trouble about getting you a place? No, sir; you are too fond of pleasure, and bed, and tea-parties, and

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small-talk, and reading novels, and playing the flute, and writing sonnets. You would no more rise at the bar than my messenger, sir. It was because I knew your disposition — that hopeless, careless, irresolute good-humour of yours—that I had determined to keep you out of danger, by placing you in a snug shelter, where the storms of the world would not come near you. You must have principles forsooth! and you must marry Miss Gorgon, of course; and by the time you have gone ten circuits, and had six children, you will have eaten up every shilling of your wife's fortune, and be as briefless as you are now. Who the deuce has put all this nonsense into your head? I think I know.'

Mr. Perkins's ears tingled as these hard words saluted them; and he scarcely knew whether he ought to knock his uncle down, or fall at his feet and say, 'Uncle, I have been a fool, and I know it.' The fact is, that in his interview with Miss Gorgon and her aunt in the morning, when he came to tell them of the resolution he had formed to give up the place, both the ladies and John himself had agreed, with a thousand rapturous tears and exclamations, that he was one of the noblest young men that ever lived, had acted as became himself, and might with perfect propriety give up the place, his talents being so prodigious that no power on earth could hinder him from being Lord Chancellor. Indeed, John and Lucy had always thought the clerkship quite beneath him, and were not a little glad, perhaps, at finding a pretext for decently refusing it. But as Perkins was a young gentleman whose candour was such that he was always swayed by the opinions of the last speaker, he did begin to feel now the truth of his uncle's statements, however disagreeable they might be.

Mr. Crampton continued:—

'I think I know the cause of your patriotism. Has not William Pitt Scully, Esquire, had something to do with it?'

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Mr. Perkins *could* not turn any redder than he was, but confessed with deep humiliation that 'he *had* consulted Mr. Scully among other friends.'

Mr. Crampton smiled—drew a letter from a heap before him, and tearing off the signature, handed over the document to his nephew. It contained the following paragraphs:—

'Hawksby has sounded Scully: we can have him any day we want him. He talks very big at present, and says he would not take anything under a . . . This is absurd. He has a Yorkshire nephew coming up to town, and wants a place for him. There is one vacant in the Tape Office, he says: have you not a promise of it?'

'I can't—I can't believe it,' said John; 'this, sir, is some weak invention of the enemy. Scully is the most honourable man breathing.'

'Mr. Scully is a gentleman in a very fair way to make a fortune,' answered Mr. Crampton. 'Look you, John—it is just as well for your sake that I should give you the news a few weeks before the papers, for I don't want you to be ruined, if I can help it, as I don't wish to have you on my hands. We know all the particulars of Scully's history. He was a Tory attorney at Oldborough; he was jilted by the present Lady Gorgon, turned Radical, and fought Sir George in his own borough. Sir George would have had the peerage he is dying for, had he not lost that second seat (by-the-bye, my Lady will be here in five minutes), and Scully is now quite firm there. Well, my dear lad, we have bought your incorruptible Scully. Look here,'—and Mr. Crampton produced three *Morning Posts*.

'"THE HONOURABLE HENRY HAWKSBY'S DINNER-PARTY.—Lord So-and-So—Duke of So-and-So—W. Pitt Scully, Esq., M.P."

'Hawksby is our neutral, our dinner-giver.

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'"LADY DIANA DOLDRUM'S ROUT.—W. Pitt Scully, Esq." again.

'"THE EARL OF MANTRAP'S GRAND DINNER."—A Duke—four Lords—"Mr. Scully, and *Sir George Gorgon.*"'

'Well, but I don't see how you have bought him; look at his votes.'

'My dear John,' said Mr. Crampton, jingling his watch-seals very complacently, 'I am letting you into fearful secrets. The great common end of party is to buy your opponents—the great statesman buys them for nothing.'

Here the attendant genius of Mr. Crampton made his appearance, and whispered something, to which the little gentleman said, 'Show her Ladyship in,'—when the attendant disappeared.

'John,' said Mr. Crampton, with a very queer smile, 'you can't stay in this room while Lady Gorgon is with me; but there is a little clerk's room behind the screen there, where you can wait until I call you.'

John retired, and as he closed the door of communication, strange to say, little Mr. Crampton sprang up and said, 'Confound the young ninny, he has shut the door!'

Mr. Crampton then, remembering that he wanted a map in the next room, sprang into it, left the door half open in coming out, and was in time to receive her Ladyship with smiling face as she, ushered by Mr. Strongitharm, majestically sailed in.

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CHAPTER III

BEHIND THE SCENES

In issuing from and leaving open the door of the inner room, Mr. Crampton had bestowed upon Mr. Perkins a look so peculiarly arch, that even he, simple as he was, began to imagine that some mystery was about to be cleared up, or some mighty matter to be discussed. Presently he heard the well-known voice of Lady Gorgon in conversation with his uncle. What could their talk be about? Mr. Perkins was dying to know, and—shall we say it?—advanced to the door on tiptoe and listened with all his might.

Her Ladyship, that Juno of a woman, if she had not borrowed Venus's girdle to render herself irresistible, at least had adopted a tender, coaxing, wheedling, frisky tone, quite different from her ordinary dignified style of conversation. She called Mr. Crampton a naughty man, for neglecting his old friends, vowed that Sir George was quite hurt at his not coming to dine,—nor fixing a day when he would come—and added, with a most engaging ogle, that she had three fine girls at home, who would perhaps make an evening pass pleasantly, even to such a gay bachelor as Mr. Crampton.

'Madam,' said he, with much gravity, 'the daughters of such a mother must be charming; but I, who have seen your Ladyship, am, alas! proof against even them.'

Both parties here heaved tremendous sighs, and affected to be wonderfully unhappy about something.

'I wish,' after a pause, said Lady Gorgon—'I wish, dear Mr. Crampton, you would not use that odious title "my Ladyship:" you know it always makes me melancholy.'

'Melancholy, my dear Lady Gorgon; and why?'

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'Because it makes me think of another title that ought to have been mine—ours (I speak for dear Sir George's and my darling boy's sake, Heaven knows, not mine). What a sad disappointment it has been to my husband, that after all his services, all the promises he has had, they have never given him his peerage. As for me, you know——'

'For you, my dear madam, I know quite well that you care for no such bauble as a coronet, except in so far as it may confer honour upon those most dear to you—excellent wife and noble mother as you are. Heigho! what a happy man is Sir George!'

Here there was another pause, and if Mr. Perkins could have seen what was taking place behind the screen, he would have beheld little Mr. Crampton looking into Lady Gorgon's face, with as love-sick a Romeo-gaze as he could possibly counterfeit; while her Ladyship, blushing somewhat and turning her own grey gogglers up to heaven, received all his words for gospel, and sat fancying herself to be the best, most meritorious, and most beautiful creature in the three kingdoms.

'You men are terrible flatterers,' continued she; 'but you say right: for myself I value not these empty distinctions. I am growing old, Mr. Crampton,—yes, indeed I am, although you smile so incredulously,—and let me add, that *my* thoughts are fixed upon *higher* things than earthly crowns. But tell me, you who are all in all with Lord Bagwig, are we never to have our peerage? His Majesty, I know, is not averse; the services of dear Sir George to a member of His Majesty's august family, I know, have been appreciated in the highest quarter. Ever since the peace we have had a promise. Four hundred pounds has Sir George spent at the Heralds' Office (I myself am of one of the most ancient families in the kingdom, Mr. Crampton), and the poor dear man's health is really ruined by the anxious sickening feeling of hope so long delayed.'

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Mr. Crampton now assumed an air of much solemnity.

'My dear Lady Gorgon,' said he, 'will you let me be frank with you, and will you promise solemnly that what I am going to tell you shall never be repeated to a single soul?'

Lady Gorgon promised.

'Well, then, since the truth you must know, you yourselves have been in part the cause of the delay of which you complain. You gave us two votes five years ago; you now only give us one. If Sir George were to go up to the Peers, we should lose even that one vote; and would it be common sense in us to incur such a loss? Mr. Scully, the Liberal, would return another Member of his own way of thinking; and as for the Lords, we have, you know, a majority there.'

'Oh, that horrid man!' said Lady Gorgon, cursing Mr. Scully in her heart, and beginning to play a rapid tattoo with her feet, 'that miscreant, that traitor, that—that attorney has been our ruin.'

'Horrid man, if you please, but give me leave to tell you that the horrid man is not the sole cause of your ruin—if ruin you will call it. I am sorry to say that I do candidly think Ministers believe that Sir George Gorgon has lost his influence in Oldborough as much through his own fault as through Mr. Scully's cleverness.'

'Our own fault! Good heavens! Have we not done everything—everything that persons of our station in the county could do, to keep those misguided men? Have we not remonstrated, threatened, taken away our custom from the Mayor, established a Conservative apothecary—in fact, done all that gentlemen could do? But these are such times, Mr. Crampton: the spirit of revolution is abroad, and the great families of England are menaced by democratic insolence.'

This was Sir George Gorgon's speech always after

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dinner, and was delivered by his lady with a great deal of stateliness. Somewhat, perhaps, to her annoyance, Mr. Crampton only smiled, shook his head, and said—

'Nonsense, my dear Lady Gorgon—pardon the phrase, but I am a plain old man, and call things by their names. Now, will you let me whisper in your ear one word of truth? You have tried all sorts of remonstrances, and exerted yourself to maintain your influence in every way, except the right one, and that is——'

'What, in Heaven's name?'

'Conciliation. We know your situation in the borough, Mr. Scully's whole history, and, pardon me for saying so (but we men in office know everything), yours——'

Lady Gorgon's ears and cheeks now assumed the hottest hue of crimson. She thought of her former passages with Scully, and of the days when—but never mind when: for she suffered her veil to fall, and buried her head in the folds of her handkercheif. Vain folds! The wily little Mr. Crampton could see all that passed behind the cambric, and continued—

'Yes, madam, we know the absurd hopes that were formed by a certain attorney twenty years since. We know how, up to this moment, he boasts of certain walks——'

'With the governess — we were always with the governess!' shrieked out Lady Gorgon, clasping her hands. 'She was not the wisest of women.'

'With the governess, of course,' said Mr. Crampton firmly. 'Do you suppose that any man dare breathe a syllable against your spotless reputation? Never, my dear madam; but what I would urge is this—you have treated your disappointed admirer too cruelly.'

'What! the traitor who has robbed us of our rights?'

'He never would have robbed you of your rights if you had been more kind to him. You should be gentle,

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"Think of the feelings of the man who saw beauty such as yours..... virtue such as yours in the possession of a rival"

C.E. Brock '903

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madam; you should forgive him—you should be friends with him.'

'With a traitor, never!'

'Think what made him a traitor, Lady Gorgon; look in your glass, and say if there be not some excuse for him? Think of the feelings of the man who saw beauty such as yours—I am a plain man and must speak—virtue such as yours, in the possession of a rival. By heavens, madam, I think he was *right* to hate Sir George Gorgon! Would you have him allow such a prize to be ravished from him without a pang on his part?'

'He was, I believe, very much attached to me,' said Lady Gorgon, quite delighted; 'but you must be aware that a young man of his station in life could not look up to a person of my rank.'

'Surely not: it was monstrous pride and arrogance in Mr. Scully. But *que voulez-vous?* Such is the world's way. Scully could not help loving you—who that knows you can? I am a plain man, and say what I think. He loves you still. Why make an enemy of him, who would at a word be at your feet? Dearest Lady Gorgon, listen to me. Sir George Gorgon and Mr. Scully have already met—their meeting was our contrivance. It is for our interest, for yours, that they should be friends. If there were two Ministerial Members for Oldborough, do you think your husband's peerage would be less secure? I am not at liberty to tell you all I know on this subject; but do, I entreat you, be reconciled to him.'

And after a little more conversation, which was carried on by Mr. Crampton in the same tender way, this important interview closed, and Lady Gorgon, folding her shawl round her, threaded certain mysterious passages and found her way to her carriage in Whitehall.

'I hope you have not been listening, you rogue?' said Mr. Crampton to his nephew, who blushed most absurdly by way of answer. 'You would have heard

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great State secrets, if you had dared to do so. That woman is perpetually here, and if peerages are to be had for the asking, she ought to have been a duchess by this time. I would not have admitted her but for a reason that I have. Go you now and ponder upon what you have heard and seen. Be on good terms with Scully, and, above all, speak not a word concerning our interview—no, not a word even to your mistress. By the way, I presume, sir, you will recall your resignation?

The bewildered Perkins was about to stammer out a speech, when his uncle, cutting it short, pushed him gently out of the door.

. . . . . .

At the period when the important events occurred which have been recorded here, parties ran very high, and a mighty struggle for the vacant Speakership was about to come on. The Right Honourable Robert Pincher was the Ministerial candidate, and Sir Charles Macabaw was patronised by the Opposition. The two Members for Oldborough of course took different sides, the baronet being of the Pincher faction, while Mr. William Pitt Scully strongly supported the Macabaw party.

It was Mr. Scully's intention to deliver an impromptu speech upon the occasion of the election, and he and his faithful Perkins prepared it between them: for the latter gentleman had wisely kept his uncle's counsel and his own, and Mr. Scully was quite ignorant of the conspiracy that was brooding. Indeed, so artfully had that young Machiavel of a Perkins conducted himself, that when asked by his patron whether he had given up his place in the Tape and Sealing-Wax Office, he replied that 'he *had* tendered his resignation,' but did not say one word about having recalled it.

'You were right, my boy, quite right,' said Mr. Scully. 'A man of uncompromising principles should make no compromise.' And herewith he sat down and

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wrote off a couple of letters, one to Mr. Hawksby, telling him that the place in the Sealing-Wax Office was, as he had reason to know, vacant; and the other to his nephew, stating that it was to be his. 'Under the rose, my dear Bob,' added Mr. Scully, 'it will cost you five hundred pounds; but you cannot invest your money better.'

It is needless to state that the affair was to be conducted 'with the strictest secrecy and honour,' and that the money was to pass through Mr. Scully's hands.

While, however, the great Pincher and Macabaw question was yet undecided, an event occurred to Mr. Scully, which had a great influence upon his after-life. A second grand banquet was given at the Earl of Mantrap's: Lady Mantrap requested him to conduct Lady Gorgon to dinner; and the latter, with a charming timidity, and a gracious melancholy look into his face (after which her veined eyelids veiled her azure eyes), put her hand into the trembling one of Mr. Scully and said, as much as looks could say, 'Forgive and forget.'

Down went Scully to dinner. There were dukes on his right hand and earls on his left; there were but two persons without title in the midst of that glittering assemblage; the very servants looked like noblemen. The cook had done wonders; the wines were cool and rich, and Lady Gorgon was splendid! What attention did everybody pay to her and to him! Why *would* she go on gazing into his face with that tender imploring look? In other words, Scully, after partaking of soup and fish (he, during their discussion, had been thinking over all the former love-and-hate passages between himself and Lady Gorgon), turned very red, and began talking to her.

'Were you not at the opera on Tuesday?' began he, assuming at once the airs of a man of fashion. 'I

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thought I caught a glimpse of you in the Duchess of Diddlesbury's box.

'Opera, Mr. Scully?' (pronouncing the word 'Scully' with the utmost softness). 'Ah, no! we seldom go, and yet too often. For serious persons the enchantments of that place are too dangerous. I am so nervous—so delicate; the smallest trifle so agitates, depresses, or irritates me, that I dare not yield myself up to the excitement of music. I am too passionately attached to it; and, shall I tell you? it has such a strange influence upon me, that the smallest false note almost drives me to distraction, and for that very reason I hardly ever go to a concert or a ball.'

'Egad,' thought Scully, 'I recollect when she would dance down a matter of five-and-forty couple, and jingle away at the "Battle of Prague" all day.'

She continued: 'Don't you recollect, I do, with—oh, what regret!—that day at Oldborough race-ball, when I behaved with such sad rudeness to you? You will scarcely believe me, and yet I assure you 'tis the fact, the music had made me almost mad. Do let me ask your pardon for my conduct. I was not myself. Oh, Mr. Scully! I am no worldly woman; I know my duties, and I feel my wrongs. Nights and days have I lain awake weeping and thinking of that unhappy day—that I should ever speak so to an old friend; for we *were* old friends, were we not?'

Scully did not speak; but his eyes were bursting out of his head, and his face was the exact colour of a deputy-lieutenant's uniform.

'That I should ever forget myself and you so! How I have been longing for this opportunity to ask you to forgive me! I asked Lady Mantrap, when I heard you were to be here, to invite me to her party. Come, I know you will forgive me—your eyes say you will. You used to look so in old days, and forgive me my caprices *then*. Do give me a little wine—we will drink to the memory of old days.'

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Her eyes filled with tears; and poor Scully's hand caused such a rattling and trembling of the glass and the decanter that the Duke of Doldrum—who had been, during the course of this whispered sentimentality, describing a famous run with the Queen's hounds at the top of his voice—stopped at the jingling of the glass, and his tale was lost for ever. Scully hastily drank his wine, and Lady Gorgon turned round to her next neighbour, a little gentleman in black, between whom and herself certain conscious looks passed.

'I am glad poor Sir George is not here,' said he, smiling.

Lady Gorgon said, 'Pooh, for shame!' The little gentleman was no other than Josiah Crampton, Esquire, that eminent financier, and he was now going through the curious calculation before mentioned, by which you *buy a man for nothing*. He intended to pay the very same price for Sir George Gorgon, too; but there was no need to tell the baronet so; only of this the reader must be made aware.

While Mr. Crampton was conducting this intrigue, which was to bring a new recruit to the Ministerial ranks, his mighty spirit condescended to ponder upon subjects of infinitely less importance, and to arrange plans for the welfare of his nephew and the young woman to whom he had made a present of his heart. These young persons, as we said before, had arranged to live in Mr. Perkins's own house in Bedford Row. It was of a peculiar construction, and might more properly be called a house and a half: for a snug little tenement of four chambers protruded from the back of the house into the garden. These rooms communicated with the drawing-rooms occupied by Mr. Scully; and Perkins, who acted as his friend and secretary, used frequently to sit in the one nearest the Member's study, in order that he might be close at hand to confer with that great man. The rooms had a private entrance too, were newly decorated,

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and in them the young couple proposed to live; the kitchen and garrets being theirs likewise. What more could they need? We are obliged to be particular in describing these apartments, for extraordinary events occurred therein.

To say the truth, until the present period Mr. Crampton had taken no great interest in his nephew's marriage, or, indeed, in the young man himself. The old gentleman was of a saturnine turn, and inclined to undervalue the qualities of Mr. Perkins, which were idleness, simplicity, enthusiasm, and easy good-nature.

'Such fellows never do anything in the world,' he would say, and for such he had accordingly the most profound contempt. But when, after John Perkins's repeated entreaties, he had been induced to make the acquaintance of Miss Gorgon, he became instantly charmed with her, and warmly espoused her cause against her overbearing relations.

At his suggestion she wrote back to decline Sir George Gorgon's peremptory invitation, and hinted at the same time that she had attained an age and a position which enabled her to be the mistress of her own actions. To this letter there came an answer from Lady Gorgon, which we shall not copy, but which simply stated that Miss Lucy Gorgon's conduct was unchristian, ungrateful, unladylike, and immodest; that the Gorgon family disowned her for the future, and left her at liberty to form whatever base connections she pleased.

'A pretty world this,' said Mr. Crampton, in a great rage, when the letter was shown to him. 'This same fellow, Scully, dissuades my nephew from taking a place, because Scully wants it for himself. This prude of a Lady Gorgon cries out shame, and disowns an innocent amiable girl: she a heartless jilt herself once, and a heartless flirt now. The Pharisees, the Pharisees! And to call mine a base family, too!'

Now, Lady Gorgon did not in the least know Mr.

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Crampton's connection with Mr. Perkins, or she would have been much more guarded in her language; but whether she knew it or not, the old gentleman felt a huge indignation, and determined to have his revenge.

'That's right, uncle! *Shall* I call Gorgon out?' said the impetuous young Perkins, who was all for blood.

'John, you are a fool,' said his uncle. 'You shall have a better revenge: you shall be married from Sir George Gorgon's house, and you shall see Mr. William Pitt Scully sold for nothing.' This to the veteran diplomatist seemed to be the highest triumph which man could possibly enjoy.

It was very soon to take place: and, as has been the case ever since the world began, woman, lovely woman, was to be the cause of Scully's fall. The tender scene at Lord Mantrap's was followed by many others equally sentimental. Sir George Gorgon called upon his colleague the very next day, and brought with him a card from Lady Gorgon inviting Mr. Scully to dinner. The attorney eagerly accepted the invitation, was received in Baker Street by the whole amiable family with much respectful cordiality, and was pressed to repeat his visits as country neighbours should. More than once did he call, and somehow always at the hour when Sir George was away at his club, or riding in the Park, or elsewhere engaged. Sir George Gorgon was very old, very feeble, very much shattered in constitution. Lady Gorgon used to impart her fears to Mr. Scully every time he called there, and the sympathising attorney used to console her as best he might. Sir George's country agent neglected the property—his lady consulted Mr. Scully concerning it. He knew to a fraction how large her jointure was; how she was to have Gorgon Castle for her life; and how, in the event of the young baronet's death (he, too, was a sickly poor boy), the chief part of the estates, bought by her money, would be at her absolute disposal.

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'What a pity these odious politics prevent me from having you for our agent,' would Lady Gorgon say; and indeed Scully thought it was a pity too. Ambitious Scully! what wild notions filled his brain. He used to take leave of Lady Gorgon and ruminate upon these things; and when he was gone, Sir George and her Ladyship used to laugh.

'If we can but commit him—if we can but make him vote for Pincher,' said the General, 'my peerage is secure. Hawksby and Crampton as good as told me so.'

The point had been urged upon Mr. Scully repeatedly and adroitly. 'Is not Pincher a more experienced man than Macabaw?' would Sir George say to his guest over their wine. Scully allowed it. 'Can't you vote for him on personal grounds, and say so in the House?' Scully wished he could—how he wished he could! Every time the General coughed, Scully saw his friend's desperate situation more and more, and thought how pleasant it would be to be lord of Gorgon Castle. 'Knowing my property,' cried Sir George, 'as you do, and with your talents and integrity, what a comfort it would be could I leave you as guardian to my boy! But these cursed politics prevent it, my dear fellow. Why *will* you be a Radical?' And Scully cursed politics too. 'Hang the lowbred rogue,' added Sir George, when William Pitt Scully left the house: 'he will do everything but promise.'

'My dear General,' said Lady Gorgon, sidling up to him and patting him on his old yellow cheek—'My dear Georgy, tell me one thing,—are you jealous?'

'Jealous, my dear! and jealous of *that* fellow—pshaw!'

'Well, then, give me leave, and you shall have the promise to-morrow.'

. . . . . .

To-morrow arrived. It was a remarkably fine day,

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and in the forenoon Mr. Perkins gave his accustomed knock at Scully's study, which was only separated from his own sitting-room by a double door. John had wisely followed his uncle's advice, and was on the best terms with the honourable Member.

'Here are a few sentences,' said he, 'which I think may suit your purpose. Great public services—undeniable merit—years of integrity—cause of reform, and Macabaw for ever!' He put down the paper. It was, in fact, a speech in favour of Mr. Macabaw.

'Hush,' said Scully, rather surlily; for he was thinking how disagreeable it was to support Macabaw; and besides, there were clerks in the room, whom the thoughtless Perkins had not at first perceived. As soon as that gentleman saw them, 'You are busy, I see,' continued he in a lower tone. 'I came to say that I must be off duty to-day, for I am engaged to take a walk with some ladies of my acquaintance.'

So saying, the light-hearted young man placed his hat unceremoniously on his head, and went off through his own door, humming a song. He was in such high spirits that he did not even think of closing the doors of communication, and Scully looked after him with a sneer.

'Ladies, forsooth,' thought he; 'I know who they are. This precious girl that he is fooling with, for one, I suppose.' He was right: Perkins was off on the wings of love, to see Miss Lucy; and she and Aunt Biggs and Uncle Crampton had promised this very day to come and look at the apartments which Mrs. John Perkins was to occupy with her happy husband.

'Poor devil,' so continued Mr. Scully's meditations, 'it is almost too bad to do him out of his place; but my Bob wants it, and John's girl has, I hear, seven thousand pounds. His uncle will get him another place before all that money is spent.' And herewith Mr. Scully began conning the speech which Perkins had made for him.

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He had not read it more than six times,—in truth, he was getting it by heart,—when his head clerk came to him from the front room, bearing a card: a footman had brought it, who said his lady was waiting below. Lady Gorgon's name was on the card! To seize his hat and rush downstairs was, with Mr. Scully, the work of an infinitesimal portion of time.

It was indeed Lady Gorgon in her Gorgonian chariot.

'Mr. Scully,' said she, popping her head out of window and smiling in a most engaging way, 'I want to speak to you on something very particular *indeed*'—and she held him out her hand. Scully pressed it most tenderly: he hoped all heads in Bedford Row were at the windows to see him. 'I can't ask you into the carriage, for you see the governess is with me, and I want to talk secrets to you.'

'Shall I go and make a little promenade?' said mademoiselle innocently. And her mistress hated her for that speech.

'No, Mr. Scully, I am sure, will let me come in for five minutes!'

Mr. Scully was only too happy. My Lady descended and walked upstairs, leaning on the happy solicitor's arm. But how should he manage? The front room was consecrated to clerks; there were clerks too, as ill-luck would have it, in his private room. 'Perkins is out for the day,' thought Scully; 'I will take her into his room.' And into Perkins's room he took her—ay, and he shut the double-doors after him too, and trembled as he thought of his own happiness.

'What a charming little study,' said Lady Gorgon, seating herself. And indeed it was very pretty: for Perkins had furnished it beautifully, and laid out a neat tray with cakes, a cold fowl, and sherry, to entertain his party withal. 'And do you bachelors always live so well?' continued she, pointing to the little cold collation.

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Mr. Scully looked rather blank when he saw it, and a dreadful suspicion crossed his soul; but there was no need to trouble Lady Gorgon with explanations: therefore, at once, and with much presence of mind, he asked her to partake of his bachelor's fare (she would refuse Mr. Scully nothing that day). A pretty sight would it have been for young Perkins to see strangers so unceremoniously devouring his feast. She drank — Mr. Scully drank—and so emboldened was he by the draught that he actually seated himself by the side of Lady Gorgon, on John Perkins's new sofa.

Her Ladyship had of course something to say to him. She was a pious woman, and had suddenly conceived a violent wish for building a chapel-of-ease at Oldborough, to which she entreated him to subscribe. She enlarged upon the benefits that the town would derive from it, spoke of Sunday-schools, sweet spiritual instruction, and the duty of all well-minded persons to give aid to the scheme.

'I will subscribe a hundred pounds,' said Scully, at the end of her Ladyship's harangue: 'would I not do anything for you!'

'Thank you, thank you, dear Mr. Scully,' said the enthusiastic woman. (How the 'dear' went burning through his soul!) 'Ah!' added she, 'if you *would* but do anything for me—if you, who are so eminently, so truly distinguished, in a religious point of view, would but see the truth in politics too; and if I could see your name among those of the true patriot party in this empire, how blest—oh! how blest should I be! Poor Sir George often says he should go to his grave happy, could he but see you the guardian of his boy; and I, your old friend (for we *were* friends, William), how have I wept to think of you as one of those who are bringing our monarchy to ruin. Do, do promise me this too!' And she took his hand and pressed it between hers.

The heart of William Pitt Scully, during this speech,

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was thumping up and down with a frightful velocity and strength. His old love, the agency of the Gorgon property—the dear widow—five thousand a year clear—a thousand delicious hopes rushed madly through his brain, and almost took away his reason. And there she sat—she, the loved one, pressing his hand and looking softly into his eyes.

Down, down he plumped on his knees.

'Juliana!' shrieked he, 'don't take away your hand! My love—my only love!—speak but those blessed words again! Call me William once more, and do with me what you will.'

Juliana cast down her eyes and said, in the very smallest type, 'William!'

. . . . . .

—when the door opened, and in walked Mr. Crampton, leading Mrs. Biggs, who could hardly contain herself for laughing, and Mr. John Perkins, who was squeezing the arm of Miss Lucy. They had heard every word of the two last speeches.

For at the very moment when Lady Gorgon had stopped at Mr. Scully's door, the four above-named individuals had issued from Great James Street into Bedford Row.

Lucy cried out that it was her aunt's carriage, and they all saw Mr. Scully come out, bare-headed, in the sunshine, and my Lady descend, and the pair go into the house. They meanwhile entered by Mr. Perkins's own private door, and had been occupied in examining the delightful rooms on the ground-floor, which were to be his dining-room and library—from which they ascended a stair to visit the other two rooms, which were to form Mrs. John Perkins's drawing-room and bedroom. Now whether it was that they trod softly, or that the stairs were covered with a grand new carpet and drugget, as was the case, or that the party within were too much occupied in themselves to heed any outward disturbances,

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I know not; but Lucy, who was advancing with John (he was saying something about one of the apartments, the rogue!)—Lucy suddenly started and whispered, 'There is somebody in the rooms!' and at that instant began the speech already reported, '*Thank you, thank you, dear Mr. Scully,*' &c. &c., which was delivered by Lady Gorgon in a full clear voice; for, to do her Ladyship justice, *she* had not one single grain of love for Mr. Scully, and, during the delivery of her little oration, was as cool as the coolest cucumber.

Then began the impassioned rejoinder, to which the four listened on the landing-place; and then the little '*William,*' as narrated above: at which juncture Mr. Crampton thought proper to rattle at the door, and, after a brief pause, to enter with his party.

'William' had had time to bounce off his knees, and was on a chair at the other end of the room.

'What, Lady Gorgon!' said Mr. Crampton, with excellent surprise, 'how delighted I am to see you! Always, I see, employed in works of charity' (the chapel-of-ease paper was on her knees), 'and on such an occasion, too,—it is really the most wonderful coincidence! My dear madam, here is a silly fellow, a nephew of mine, who is going to marry a silly girl, a niece of your own.'

'Sir, I——' began Lady Gorgon, rising.

'They heard every word,' whispered Mr. Crampton eagerly. 'Come forward, Mr. Perkins, and show yourself.' Mr. Perkins made a genteel bow. 'Miss Lucy, please to shake hands with your aunt; and this, my dear madam, is Mrs. Biggs, of Mecklenburgh Square, who, if she were not too old, might marry a gentleman in the Treasury, who is your very humble servant.' And with this gallant speech, old Mr. Crampton began helping everybody to sherry and cake.

As for William Pitt Scully, he had disappeared, evaporated, in the most absurd sneaking way imaginable.

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Lady Gorgon made good her retreat presently, with much dignity, her countenance undismayed, and her face turned resolutely to the foe.

. . . . . .

About five days afterwards, that memorable contest took place in the House of Commons, in which the partisans of Mr. Macabaw were so very nearly getting him the Speakership. On the day that the report of the debate appeared in the *Times*, there appeared also an announcement in the *Gazette* as follows :—

'The King has been pleased to appoint John Perkins, Esquire, to be Deputy-Subcomptroller of His Majesty's Tape Office and Custos of the Sealing-Wax Department.'

Mr. Crampton showed this to his nephew with great glee, and was chuckling to think how Mr. William Pitt Scully would be annoyed, who had expected the place, when Perkins burst out laughing and said, 'By heavens, here is my own speech! Scully has spoken every word of it; he has only put in Mr. Pincher's name in the place of Mr. Macabaw's.

'He is ours now,' responded his uncle, 'and I told you *we would have him for nothing*. I told you, too, that you should be married from Sir George Gorgon's, and here is proof of it.'

It was a letter from Lady Gorgon, in which she said that, 'had she known Mr. Perkins to be a nephew of her friend Mr. Crampton, she never for a moment would have opposed his marriage with her niece, and she had written that morning to her dear Lucy, begging that the marriage breakfast should take place in Baker Street.'

'It shall be in Mecklenburgh Square,' said John Perkins stoutly; and in Mecklenburgh Square it was.

William Pitt Scully, Esquire, was, as Mr. Crampton said, hugely annoyed at the loss of the place for his

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nephew. He had still, however, his hopes to look forward to, but these were unluckily dashed by the coming in of the Whigs. As for Sir George Gorgon, when he came to ask about his peerage, Hawksby told him that they could not afford to lose him in the Commons, for a Liberal Member would infallibly fill his place.

And now that the Tories are out and the Whigs are in, strange to say a Liberal does fill his place. This Liberal is no other than Sir George Gorgon himself, who is still longing to be a lord, and his lady is still devout and intriguing. So that the Members for Oldborough have changed sides, and taunt each other with apostasy, and hate each other cordially. Mr. Crampton still chuckles over the manner in which he tricked them both, and talks of those five minutes during which he stood on the landing-place, and hatched and executed his 'Bedford-Row Conspiracy.'

THE END

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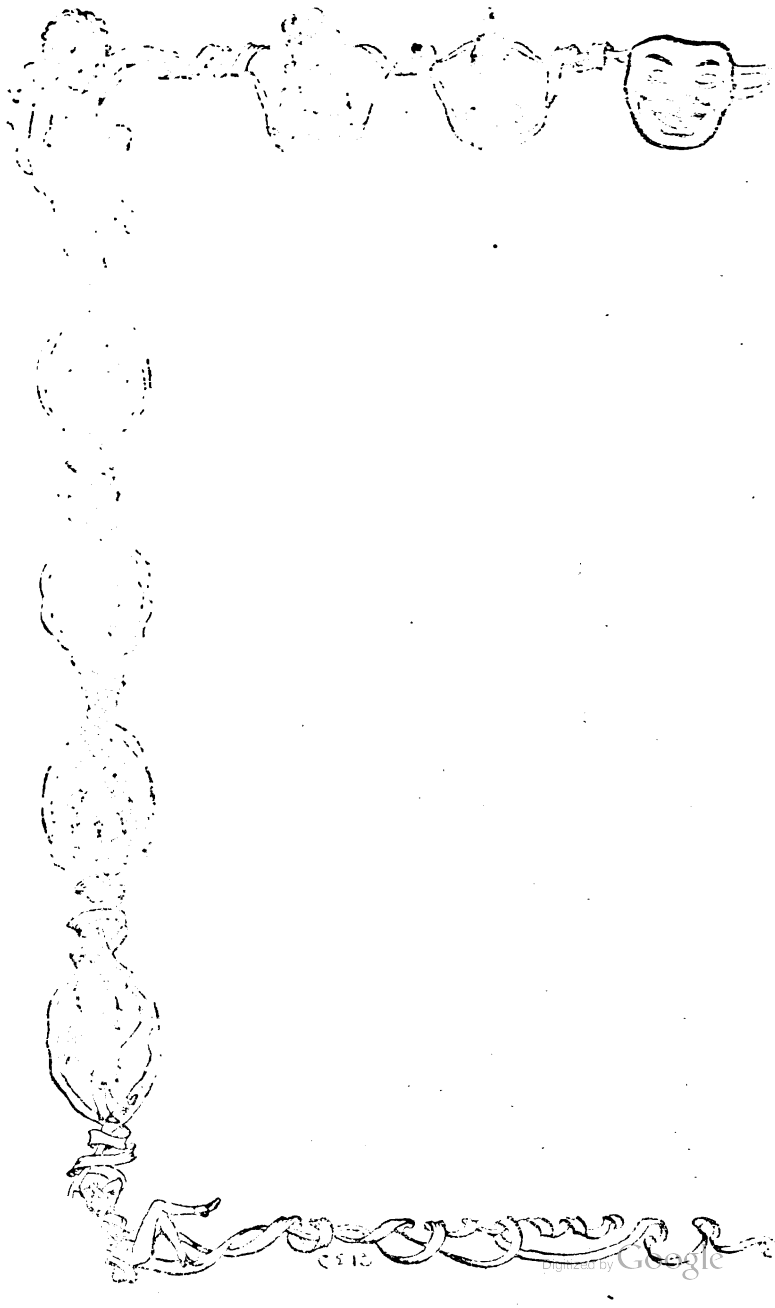
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